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# CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Vol. 1.

*SPECIAL PART.*

FIRST DIVISION: INDIVIDUAL ETHICS.

BY

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BISHOP OF SEELAND.

Translated from the Author's German Edition

BY

WILLIAM AFFLECK, B.D.

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## PREFACE.

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**I**N the General Part of this work (page 463) I gave my views on the relation existing between that and the more strictly practical part, which latter is now presented in two divisions, namely Individual and Social Ethics, the first of which has regard chiefly to the individual, the other to society. So, then, the whole essay is closed herewith, and experts will be able to prove what value may belong to the method here applied to the treatment of Ethics.

But if the Special Part was to be connected with the General as a side-piece, there was needed a certain amplitude of statement and a form corresponding to the subjects handled. And from the whole design of this work, it will scarcely require an apology that parts occur in it of an edifying character, or at least bordering thereon. On the whole, it is to be remarked, however, that in the progress of a more ample statement, it is not always easy to hit the boundary between what the author has to express and what he can fitly leave to the reader to say to himself, a difficulty which makes itself felt more especially where so much is treated of that in a certain sense is known to all, although all do not therefore by any means rightly understand or have fully acknowledged it.

When I published the General Part, I expressed the hope that it would also find acceptance with educated non-theologians. In now thanking non-theological as well as theological readers, who have bestowed on the General Part so benevolent an attention, I can only wish that the Special Part may find a similar interest. No doubt the nature of the contents involves that even if the reader agrees with the fundamental views, some difference of opinion may emerge when the general has to be connected with and applied to the special relations of actual life. This may well hold good especially

of those relations handled in the second division of the present book, the social and political, where the changeable side of the moral idea especially appears, where the solution of the problems presented can only be sought and found under conditions which are given by a historical development or complication, and where at the same time even the ethical judgment, as well as the ethical requirement, must be conditioned by the comprehension of actual, often complicated circumstances and relations. Here, as regards many points, a difference of individual views and judgments will scarcely be avoidable. And yet one must either abstain from writing a special Ethic, extending also over social conditions, or one must—which it is true many disapprove who in these questions are not willingly embarrassed by the Ethical—enter upon the moveable, changeable side of the moral world, must discuss questions of the day, which though of a composite and mixed nature, yet in every case have an ethical side that must get justice, and for the fundamental examination of which no other place can be pointed out but just Ethics. But the last problem of special Ethics must surely be this: by means of the contemplation of the alterable and changeable to lead to a more fundamental knowledge, a deeper founding of the unchangeable, to promote the consciousness of that which remains the same in every sphere of life, alike yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, the same with its blessings, but also with its requirements, not only of individuals but also of peoples. That the present writing may quietly co-operate to the establishment of this one imperishable thing in sentiment and mode of thought, is what I wish most of all.

There are added an Index of things and names to the whole work, as well as a list of the passages of Scripture occasionally discussed. This addition will, as I suppose, be not unwelcome to our readers.

H. MARTENSEN.

COPENHAGEN.

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# INDIVIDUAL ETHICS.



## LIFE UNDER THE LAW AND SIN.

### § 1.

EVERY human life that has not yet become a partaker of redemption, is *a life under the law*, in opposition to the life under grace. For, be the man conscious of it or not, the law as yet always hovers over his life as an unfulfilled requirement, and, in the depth of his own being, this remains at present as an indissmissible but unsatisfied and unexpiated claim on him, which characterizes such a human existence as sinful and guilt-laden, because in contradiction with its original destiny. The chief and central requirement of the law is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." But man with his natural powers is unable to fulfil this same first, this great commandment. And although many are conscious of this commandment, only as a mere reminiscence of what they call an antiquated doctrine of the Catechism, the obligation and validity of which they have long ceased to recognise, yet this bit of Catechism is not a strange and external command, merely imposed upon man, as they would fain persuade themselves, but rather the inmost, deepest requirement of their own being. And the non-fulfilment of this command, and what further is connected with that non-fulfilment, concludes under sin the whole world with all its glory, with all its virtues and systems of morals. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that a relative fulfilling of the law is possible, even outside the domain of redemption,

which is seen not only in Judaism, but also in heathenism, and in modern humanity divorced from Christianity.

That even outside the fellowship of Christ, man is able to exercise virtue and good works, in this consists the truth in the optimist view of heathenism. But the superficial, uncritical optimism, with its delusion that no essential disturbance and destruction has entered man's life, but that all is in good original order (*res integra*), that the heathen, the so-called purely human, virtue is normal, and need only be further developed, but not transformed and changed from the foundation, finds its corrective in the pessimist sentence of the old church Father, that the virtues of the heathen are splendid vices. This paradox contains at any rate the deep truth, that the main impress of the heathen world consists in *unbelief* as the chief and radical sin, which must also affect the nature of heathen virtue; that the *holiness of God*, with its unsatisfied requirement, hovers over the heathen world, wherefore also the holy Scripture describes all men as "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). The entire human state within which those virtues are exercised, is a state of unrighteousness, in which man, instead of having in God the centre of his life, has it only in himself or in this world. And even if such virtues show that egoism is broken at certain points, yet is it not broken at its root, for self-denial and love are here present merely in lower peripheric relations, but not in the central relation of man, the relation to God. In man's inmost part, humility and love to God are wanting; a darkness has entered there, and in that darkness is enthroned the will, averted from God and diverted to its own self. Yet not without reason has that pessimist paradox of the old church Father caused offence, and been designated inhuman, because it overlooks an intermediate step which must not be overlooked. It not only forgets that the holy Scripture makes a difference between the righteous and the unrighteous, even in the heathen world, and speaks of heathen who "seek for glory, and honour, and immortality" (Rom. ii. 6-10), but ignores at the same time that even when the relation to the *God* of goodness is destroyed, there is still a relation to the *idea* of goodness. And although one must acknowledge that moral effort in the heathen world moves outside the true centre, yet even that effort, moving in

the periphery, has its relative value, and that just because it bears in it the idea of the good; while it must no doubt be granted that the merely human, as, for example, love of country and other civil virtues, can be nothing but imperfect, so long as it is not brought into the right attitude to the divine centre. Instead, then, of designating the virtues of the heathen as splendid vices, we believe we come nearer the truth when we rather designate them as splendid fragments which were designed to erect an admirable work of art, a temple of humanity, which it is true can never be realized in the way here taken, because there is wanting the principle of unity, the creative principle, that of the divine love; fragments which yet are witnesses of the glory to which man was originally designed, and to pursue which he feels himself inwardly constrained.

As we would now take a closer view of these fragments, these moral states of life under the law, which, be it remembered, do not merely belong to the historical past, but are repeated daily before our own eyes, we first cast a glance on the state in which life is as yet lived without law, that is, where a man, without having hitherto come to a conscious and independent position over against the law and duty, lives according to his born nature, to his individualized natural capacity, which disposes him in a definite peculiar way for his personal life.

## LIFE WITHOUT LAW.

LIFE ACCORDING TO MERE NATURE.—STATES OF IMMEDIATENESS.

### § 2.

“I was alive without the law once,” says the Apostle Paul, Rom. vii. 9, by which he would say, that there was a time in his life in which he lived on without being conscious of the divine law and commandment as such. He has not designated this state of life more fully, but only says of it that sin then “was dead,” or slumbered; while, on the other hand, the consciousness of sin and that of sinful lusts was “revived” when the commandment came, that is, approached him. We

would scarcely err, however, if we assume that he looked back on his *childhood*, with its unconsciousness and partial innocence (freedom from wickedness, and harmlessness), as to a paradisiacal point of light in his life. At all events he here indicates a state which we may call the *pre-ethical*, where the struggle between the spirit and the flesh, between conscience and desire, has not yet awoken, the consciousness of duty is still superficial, while the man preponderantly lives according to his nature; where, thus, the ethical, be it good or evil, is only as it were just dawning in the instinctive life. During this time the will, even when it does what is moral, is not yet the *self-conscious* moral, but only the natural will, although what here is working and moving under the natural form is the moral. The life without law can therefore be shown in all states of immediateness, where the man is not yet come to reflection, and so especially in the naive states of childhood and youth. The young innocent maiden, who grows up under the unconscious influence of domestic discipline and manners, who, glad of life, follows her nature, and through a happy instinct is led as by a guardian spirit to what is good, and comely, and amiable, even if in her amiable innocence there is no small ingredient of naive self-love; the genial youth, whose healthy nature itself preserves him from the ways of immorality, whose inner man is filled with a wealth of future ideals, who is quite spent in the effort to assume to himself the glory of the earthly existence, fully devoted to his commencing development of talent,—both are still living without law in the given meaning of the word. They have not yet become conscious of the earnest problem of the personality, and therewith of the hidden contradiction within their existence, which brings so severe contests with it in the next stage of life. The same thing, however, also holds good in the opposite direction. As there are individuals to whom we attribute a good nature, so there are others of whose bad nature we speak. There are individuals who already in childhood and youth are defiled with shame, with sins and vices, but who for all that are going on without law, that is, they are not conscious of their sin as sin, they know not what they do, or at least only very slightly. Now, the happier the nature is with which such a man has been furnished, the

more will he look back from a later standpoint, where he finds himself in the midst of the struggles of duty, and has already experienced many a defeat, upon that relatively unconscious and innocent state, as upon a fair and happy time, although on a more earnest and thorough review he will here already discover the germs of later sins. Granted, these states of childhood's immediateness are very variously modified in different individuals through education and position of life. But yet many can say: "I also was alive without the law once;" or as one may express it according to the known word of the poet: I also was in Arcadia! Duty was then no burden for us, it was not in conflict with our inclination; we did not further reflect on what we should do. We lived on in happy, careless comfort, without ever a whereto or wherefore, and followed our sympathies and antipathies. We let the sun smile on us, let the pictures and impressions of the world flow upon us, and daily experienced something new. We gave ourselves to every agreeable occupation, and pursued the thing with pleasure, while we as far as possible avoided everything else that was not agreeable to us. For if at times duty also announced itself with one requirement or another, yet it was not exactly importunate and too burdensome; while we ourselves again were full of claims on fortune, full of golden pictures of the future, and hopes to whose fulfilment we thought we had a well-grounded right. But to-day that is all become quite different; world and life show us quite another face.

## STATES OF IMMEDIATENESS.

As upon retrospect a happy childhood may often seem to us like a vanished paradise, so may the poetic state of juvenile life, when we still lived "without law," many a time present a form akin to the world of fable. The persons occurring in a story are not characters, in the ethical meaning of the word, but spiritual beings, *natures* of good and bad, noble and ignoble, higher and lower kind, which undisturbed pursue their end, without ever being burdened by the pressure of ethical problems. The attraction which such fictions exercise on us lies just in this, that they reflect to us through the

magnifying-glass of the fancy, the corresponding experience of our own soul, what we ourselves have met in life; and then, too, when we are in entirely different, yea, opposite relations, give us back our own lost childhood, the world of our immediateness, as in a vision. Therefore Oehlenschlaeger, the poet of Aladdin,—so great when he depicts the pre-ethical, spirit-like natural being (as in the myths of the North),—by his fable from *The Thousand and One Nights*, will bewitch at all times not only youth that can itself say with Aladdin:

“But, oh, how do I my whole life now feel  
In this one cheerful summer morning hour!”<sup>1</sup>

but will also delight age, which is glad yet again to dream that dream in the realm of the dawn.

NATURE AND CHARACTER.—NATURAL VIRTUES AND FAULTS.

### § 3.

The naive states of immediateness, in the stricter sense of the word, can be but transient in the actual world. It conflicts with the destiny of man as a moral being to live as a mere natural being, as he has rather, through his free self-determination, to develop himself to a character, and with this also to cultivate and express his nature. A life only according to the *nature* cannot be carried through were it but for this, that the man has not simply natural virtues only, but has also natural faults and defects as well; that there is a schism present in his nature, which seeks its solution on a higher stage of life. Sooner or later, duty appears with its earnestness, and forces the man into a development of character. For when our will determines itself in the relation to duty and calling, and in this relation, by means of a progressive series of transactions, gives itself an essential impress, there is formed a *character*, good or bad, strong or weak, and so on, in opposition to the mere nature, which can only furnish the foundation for a character.

<sup>1</sup> *Aladdin oder die Wunderlampe*. Dramatisches Gedicht. Neue Aufl., 2 Thl. Leipz. 1820, S. 89.



Even Aristotle distinguishes between natural and ethical virtues, and would attribute no value to natural virtues in and for themselves. He says, for example, that some are by nature brave, just, temperate, and so on; but children and beasts have also natural virtues; and that virtue, in the proper sense, first arises through the self-conscious moral will which practises virtue. Yea, he remarks: the merely natural virtues, when understanding and insight are not added, can even become injurious, as a man of corpulent figure would make the more dangerous a fall. His meaning is this, that so long as a man lives according to mere nature, he will act without a plan, and as accident brings it about, will often give effect to his natural virtues in a one-sided way, and thereby easily offend against that which the moral problem requires. He, for example, who is naturally good-natured, will, on all opportunities, manifest this virtue, even when just the opposite virtue was needed, when he should show simply strict rectitude. He who is naturally just will constantly let himself be influenced by his innate feeling of rectitude, even where one is called upon to show mildness and mercy. Enthusiasm for the great and elevated is a natural virtue, which we often meet in young people. But so long as these live after their mere nature, they often show their enthusiasm in the wrong place, even where it would be better to show quietness and discretion. If such a man, living merely after his nature, possess at the same time an eminent talent, for instance, for poetry, and not at the same time, say, the innate virtue of modesty and unassumingness, he will prove extremely burdensome to all his surroundings. He will everywhere introduce his talent and what stands in conjunction with it, care for nothing else, speak of nothing else, feel unhappy and superfluous in society if those around him do not care for the same things. In this sense we say with Aristotle, that natural virtues are hurtful when understanding and insight are not added. On the other hand, however, we say that they are very advantageous and wholesome, so soon as they are governed by the practical wisdom which assigns to each single virtue its place and due limit, namely, by placing it in relation to that which ought to be the problem for the whole man. For then they serve as a support to the correspond-

ing ethical virtues, and work together in harmony with the latter.

Every one who would work at the formation of his character will, no doubt, also make the agreeable observation and experience, that he is in possession of certain natural virtues which contribute to his fulfilment of duty, the requirement of duty entirely coinciding with his natural inclination. When duty, for instance, requires of me to afford help to an unfortunate, and compassion forms one of my natural virtues, duty and inclination coincide, and to do my duty is then a joy to me. Only it is not always so. Every one will also have the opposite experience, namely, that he is without certain natural virtues, or at least that they are only sparingly allotted to him; he will, at the same time, discover that he has certain natural faults, which become ethical faults as soon as one admits them into his will, and which, unhappily, he had already discovered in the region of his volition and action, before he applied himself to resist them. Here we hit upon a duality, a contradiction in human nature, which we will illustrate by two comprehensive examples, in casting a glance on human temperaments on the one hand, and on the male and female nature on the other.

#### THE TEMPERAMENTS.—THE MALE AND THE FEMALE NATURE.

##### § 4.

We begin with the *sanguine* temperament, which may be fitly designated as the *enjoying*, or also as the naive temperament. It lets life immediately, and without reflection, press in on it, and thus is especially suited to childhood. The peculiarity of this temperament consists in the all-sided susceptibility for the most various impressions. It disposes the man to move with the greatest ease in the varied manifoldness of life, to pass with the same ease from one interest to another. It serves to promote the higher ideal life of the individual, so far as it fits the man to receive the influences of the whole fulness of existence, to appropriate the glory of life, to keep the eye open for great and small, for all colours, all



flowers of the world. Yea, it promotes the fulfilment of duty itself, so far as it disposes to live entirely in the present, in this moment; for duty just requires us to live for the present, for the moment, as it also requires that all sides, all elements of life, should have justice. But the same temperament opposes great hindrances to the fulfilment of duty, because it disposes to flightiness, to superficiality, and so to split up life into an unconnected multiplicity, as well as, finally, to indecision and unreliability. Every one in whom this temperament predominates will have struggle enough with himself. For when we said that it disposes to flightiness, we have not yet said enough. A more penetrating experience teaches us that each of the temperaments not only brings with it the temptation to degenerate into the extreme, to pass over into its own caricature, but has even an innate inclination, a natural tendency thereto; that the germs for a caricature of itself are present from the first, that they grow and unfold in increasing measure, except one afterwards succeed in quenching them.

In contrast to the sanguine as the enjoying and naive, we can designate the *melancholy* as the *suffering*, or as the "sentimental" temperament.<sup>1</sup> This disposes to such moods as contain the contrast between ideal and reality, while it, however, remains undetermined which ideal or ideals exercise their power over the mind; for as an infinite difference is possible here, the melancholy mind has often no clear conception of the powers that move in it. It inclines one to take life on the earnest side, and to sadness, so that one is disposed to remembrance and to longing, and lives in the past or the future, as one cannot find his satisfaction in the present. To this temperament youth especially corresponds, without needing, on that account, to expel the sanguine; it belongs especially to that time of life in which love to the other sex awakes, and therewith also love for ideas, to the age in which ideas are still fermenting, and have assumed no shape. No higher ideal effort is possible without an element of the melancholic. It supports the fulfilment of duty, so far as in this, more than the mere outer world of the senses and the surface of life

<sup>1</sup> Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, II. 357. On the whole doctrine of temperaments, compare Sibbern's *Pathology* (Danish).

comes into view, inclines to deeper meditation, and disposes to give ear to the voices of the spirit, which speak to the soul even amid the throng and confusion of daily life. But yet it also opposes hindrances to the fulfilment, yea, to the consciousness of duty, the melancholist having a propensity to live in his *mood*, that is, in the prolonged succession of the *same* feelings. While the sanguinist passes with ease from one feeling, from one mental state to another, the melancholist is bound to one and the same state and mood, which he cannot quit. As it is the proper inclination of the melancholist to despise the present and this moment, which never satisfies him, and as his inclination draws him preponderantly to the past or future, he is in danger of becoming *unpractical*. If one do not succeed in mastering this temperament ethically and disciplinarily, there is developed in the soul a consuming selfishness, in which the individuality, with its unsatisfied claims, is incessantly busied with itself amid fruitless ponderings, which is eminently the case with poetic natures (Goethe's *Tasso*). While the one-sided sanguinist gets into a false optimism, the melancholist falls into a false pessimism, an ideal fanatical despising of his surroundings, of the daily prose of life and duty. And if the sanguinist is specially given to sensual sins, there is developed in the melancholist—simply because he is so infinitely important to himself—a secret pride, a morbid vanity, which runs into distrust of other men, from whom he fears ignoring, disregard, falseness, and other evils.

The *choleric* temperament is very properly to be designated the *practical*, and belongs especially to mature age. It disposes to action, to energetic engagement in life, to courage and endurance, and is so far advantageous to the ethical interest. But yet again, on the other side, it is also a hindrance to the ethical development, as the choleric is inclined to the regardless maintenance of the object that has once been aimed at, to passionate volcanic violence, to which all means are right, as the object must be reached at any price, is inclined to obstinacy and stubbornness, to that narrowness which steers exclusively to one point which it has once taken for its mark, shutting the eyes to the surrounding widespread fulness of life, and consequently blind to the many other requirements

addressed to the moral will. More than any other, the choleric is in danger of becoming a moral particularist or oddity. His cardinal faults are usually pride and the lust of power, anger and irritability, hatred, revenge, and jealousy.

The direct opposite of the choleric is the *phlegmatic* temperament, which we, in opposition to the choleric as the active and agitating, may call the contemplative, or, more accurately, the *quietistic*, the temperament of peace and rest, of discretion and inner equipoise. We can designate it the contemplative, so far as it regards things dispassionately and with impartial view. Yet it must be remembered that the melancholy temperament has also a tendency to the contemplative, namely, to brood over the problems of life, to seek the solution of the enigmas of life. But while the melancholist ever bears a sting in his soul, the phlegmatist is disposed to a frame of mind in which the sting is not, or is no longer felt, the frame which feels in harmony, in peace with existence, wonders at nothing that occurs among all the changes of this world (*nil admirari*), and is never overpowered by a passion, because it has it under its control. Therefore the correct designation is the very one employed: the quietistic temperament, in which in itself no fault-finding side-meaning is contained. Now, that the temperament of discretion, of equipoise, of peace and tranquillity, is helpful to ethical effort, is clear. But it is equally clear that peace of mind only acquires its value through the opposition which it carries in itself as internally overcome and controlled. And the hindrance to the ethical that is here at hand is, that the phlegmatist is inclined to indifference, insensibility, sloth, and sleepy rest, that is, to false quietism, which lets the world go its way, and contents itself with the actual, just as it is, without making a claim on the ideal, and without feeling the slightest pain for what is lacking, which, on the contrary, is reckoned among juvenile enthusiasms. In phlegmatists there is often found a hard and cold heart.

### § 5.

And if we now direct our glance to *the difference of the sexes*, similar observations have to be made. The sexual difference embraces the *whole* individuality, for man and

woman are differently organized, as well in a psychical as a bodily point of view. Each of them is destined to represent humanity, yet with such limitation that only both together present the whole human being. Man is organized to manifest humanity mainly in the universal direction, wherefore the spheres of his activity are the state and civil society, science and art; woman, on the other hand, in the individual direction, wherefore she finds her sphere of work chiefly in the family and in domestic life. He is related to her as the spirit is related to the soul, and while man has to develop his spirit's life to the psychical, woman has to develop her psychical life to the spiritual. The nature of man adapts him to exercise the leading influence in the affairs of human society, to exercise dominion, to struggle, be it for wife and children, for fatherland, or for ideas. The nature of woman leads her to subordinate herself, to serve and follow. And if we, after Aristotle, may name courage as the chief virtue of the male nature, that of the female may be designated gentleness or the gentle heart, whereby she is fitted to become man's helper, a quiet energy which clothes itself in grace and decency, and shows her not only fit to suffer, to devote herself, but also to rule through the impression she produces, the effects that proceed from her, which bind as much as they tend to mitigate and soften. Although all the four temperaments are found in the man as well as in the woman, yet the choleric and phlegmatic temperaments are more akin to the man, the sanguine and melancholy to the woman. A woman in whom the choleric or phlegmatic predominates makes the impression of unwomanliness, of manliness shown in the wrong place; again, a man in whom the sanguine or the melancholy temperament has a one-sided predominance, makes the repulsive impression of effeminacy.

When the male nature is in truth masculine and manly, the female truly feminine, the observer will find this utterance confirmed: *Chacun a les défauts de ses vertus* (Every one has the defects of his virtues). Because the man is adapted for universal humanity, he possesses a far greater power of thought than the woman, possesses the power to engage both theoretically and practically in the struggle with existence. But with this advantage there is united a one-sided devotion to the

universal, whereby he is carried away into contradictions and disharmonies, as well of his knowledge as of his existence and entire position in life, to which the woman is not exposed. Ever anew does it appear in man that he in his existence has fallen a prey to a dualism between nature and spirit, that he now exists in one-sided spirituality, now in one-sided sensuality. Woman, again, is adapted for the harmonious unity of nature and spirit. In her knowledge she embraces all things intuitively, and thereby is able in many cases to know the true and right, where the man through his very reflection is hindered from seeing this. Although she does not possess the man's gift of abstraction, she is yet susceptible of the highest ideas, and can understand all. Only it must be presented to her in clear and concrete forms; for otherwise she does not understand it; or if she understands it, it does not interest her, and she at once lets it go. Also she is more interested (and this her nature, directed towards actual life, involves) in results, than in the methods and the way by which the intellect has arrived at them. She feels more strongly drawn to art than to science; and, above all, she is fitted for religion, in that she, as the weaker creature, feels more deeply her dependence and her need of a higher help and support. There are far more religious women than men, simply because they have not to undergo the struggle with the pride of knowledge and understanding; and an irreligious and unbelieving woman gives in a higher degree the impression of the unnatural than an irreligious man. However, we do not enter more fully in the present connection upon the position of the one and the other to religion, but only remark that that sense, innate in woman, for the intuitive and the particular, which imparts peculiar advantages to her conception of the world and of life, is often combined with a superficiality that remains satisfied with the outside of existence, with appearance and phenomenon, without penetrating to the essence. True, this imperfection may also be observed in many men. But a superficiality of knowledge, which is satisfied with flowers torn off, that are separate from their root, and which—as is to be seen in many emancipated women—coquets with them, is more akin to the female nature, and in man belongs to what is womanish. On the whole, one may say that the



woman has especially to struggle with the inclination to take all too easily the knowledge of the problems of life, to rest content with what lies nearest her, instead of penetrating to the deeper foundation. As a counterpart to the women whose superficiality delights to shine with a half and seeming culture, there is another class whose superficiality thus quiets itself regarding the earnest questions of life: that these are mere things they do not understand, and which they also do not in the least need to understand. This may be right in many cases; but in the *practical* sphere, which, rightly understood, lies much deeper than many women think, that which the woman both can and will understand is enough, provided she desires to use the gifts bestowed on her.

While the man is called to work in human society, in public life, the woman not only to work in the family, but also beyond that to rule even legislatively, namely, in regard to customs, manners, and social tone; yet there are found beside the virtues of the one as of the other, the corresponding faults as their shadows. Man has to struggle with temptations to the love of power, to ambition, to covetousness; woman, with the temptation to vanity. Her natural virtue is not only grace, but also an innate dignity, proceeding from her invisible genius, her eternal individuality, and banishing from her proximity all that is common, unbecoming, and contrary to the finer sense of honour. It is that harmonious unity of the spiritual and the sensual, of womanly elevation and grace, which the poet has in view in the often quoted words:

“One virtue sufficeth for woman: she is here, she appeareth;  
Fair to the heart, to the eye, may she ever appear.”

But even on account of this æsthetic, to which the female nature is adapted, precisely because woman not only appears fair to the heart but also to the *eye*, it is a frequent fault of woman that she would please in the wrong sense,—for that she seeks to please in itself deserves no blame, any more than man is to blame for desiring to be esteemed,—that while neglecting the culture of her heart, while setting aside her dignity, she follows only appearance, in vanity, love of dress and display, follows the poet's word: *she appears*; that she contents herself with external decency, with merely external manners, which

she, it is true, cannot violate without doing violence to her own being, but under such a covering and mask hides everything that is not at all lovely and amiable. Then this perverted tendency to please, to shine, and to appear, misleads her to envy, enmity, rivalry, to the war which women wage with each other, to an ill habit predominant in this sex, about which Schopenhauer, who had so sharp an eye for female weaknesses, but no eye for female worth, in his bitter, pessimist way says: While the guild-spirit and guild-envy of men only apply to one guild, and envy, hatred, and enmity only occur among those who follow the same business, in women it extends to their whole sex, because they all follow but one and the same business (namely, the art of pleasing).

As the male nature is adapted for universal humanity, it is a frequent fault of men to despise the single, the small, the unimportant, to live far too much *en gros* and not *en détail*, to overlook what is at hand, the nearest, because they are busied with problems that lie beyond the moment. Herein also an advantage granted to woman appears, in that, with her sense for the single and special, she unites the sense for what is small and near. She possesses an eminent talent to live in the present moment, is never at a loss for time. With the most trifling means she knows how to make a dwelling, a house comfortable; and from the simplest flowers that no one regarded, she weaves the fairest garlands. But precisely with this gift there is united an oft-repeated fault, namely, losing herself in little things, nay, in the small, the trifle; a too lively interest in the flighty and merely transient, whence arise curiosity, loquacity, the passion to make many words about nothing. In social circles one might be suddenly deafened when he hears a group of women talking together, and that about the most unimportant matters. This pleasure in conversation is not found in such fashion in men, who, besides, must even learn from superior women what right conversation is. Without doubt, the passion mentioned is connected with the destiny of women to be occupied with children, and to provide for their entertainment and amusement. Why, for whole days they are obliged to play and chat with the children, for which unquestionably a readiness of tongue is requisite, combined with an unweariedness and

inexhaustibleness awaiting to men. To this talent, then, there cleaves the fault mentioned. The innate tendency to loquacity also leads to gossip, chiefly in order to have matter of conversation. Woman is more disposed than man to become a member of a school for scandal. The same love of prattle further leads to the blurring out of secrets that ought not to be told.

And yet that setting aside of the little which is peculiar to man, that one-sided interest in the great, the general, the important, may introduce into his life the loudest discords. We can make this plain by a glance at Socrates, the founder of ethics. Of this man it is said he brought down philosophy from heaven to earth, yea, introduced it into the houses; he taught men to philosophize not so much about nature, about the paths of the heavenly vault, as rather about themselves. He entered into conversation with all and sundry, with shoemakers and tailors, with tanners and smiths, with poets and sophists, with orators and statesmen, accommodated himself to the comprehension of each one, in order to help him to understand himself and his moral problems. His admirable greatness consisted even in this, that the wisdom he taught was no empty speculation, but practical wisdom fruitful for the life. Only a single point remained behind, where he did not make his wisdom fruitful, and where he neglected what most concerned him,—namely, his own house. He was the teacher of all Greece, yet but a bad paterfamilias. However much emphasis he laid in his teaching on the practical, he was yet actually one-sidedly given to the theoretical, namely, to philosophizing on the ethical problems, and to the endeavour to awaken in others also this philosophical activity. His spouse Xanthippe had no doubt some right to be discontented with him. True, one must assume in regard to this woman that she could not enter into what most interested him. But, according to the accounts of her personality extant, she was no way ill-natured, rather of sterling character, was honestly provident for her family and her house, although passionate, and in daily intercourse not easy to deal with.<sup>1</sup> But the whole day he went about the city to carry on his philosophic conversations, when he also drew up with women of genius

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, II. 1. 46.



of the sort of Aspasia. His ideal interests in such a degree estranged him from his own house, that not only did he remain out whole days, but at times also entire nights. In all probability she must not seldom have lacked the money necessary for housekeeping, as he was known to be poor, and took no payment for his instruction. Now, it is very natural that the failings of the male nature, peculiar to him, and the failings of the female nature came into collision, that she often gave vent to her displeasure, and from the most trifling things took occasion for passionate outbursts, whereby her doubtless sanguine-choleric temperament was still more excited and inflamed, that it collided with his quiet philosophic phlegm, that heard her lively reproaches in perfectly quietistic (motionless) composure. How little he cared for her, one sees from Plato's *Phædo*, where it is related that when his friends came to him in prison shortly before his death, they saw Xanthippe, with her baby boy in her arms, sitting by him; but when she lamented, "Alas! Socrates, now thou wilt converse with these thy friends for the last time," he spoke thus, "Let some one take this woman home." She was led away weeping and crying, after the manner of women, whereupon he held the famous philosophical conversation on the immortality of the soul. However much may be urged in mitigation of the affair, by adducing the hardness of feeling (insusceptibility) of the ancient world, and its limited view of women; at any rate there is only to be seen in this wedded pair a chief manifestation of that opposition of the male and female nature—he interested in the great, she in the little, without a harmonious equalization being brought about. At the same time, it appears that he, the great student of man and world-famous satirist, must have fully mistaken the individuality of Xanthippe, and must have been under an illusion when he choose her for his spouse.

While the man, whose universal tendency lets him act according to clearly recognised principles, is in danger of falling a prey to a one-sided tendency of the understanding, to become doctrinaire, and in spite of all the objections of life and experience, one-sidedly to carry out his principles, and to sacrifice the reality of circumstances to logical consistency; the woman, again, has the great advantage of being determined

by feeling, by the heart, by moral tact, in her dealings. But hereby again she is more exposed to the one-sidedness of feeling, which often leads her astray. If her feeling lacks the right depth, she becomes, from want of moral principles, unreliable, unsteady, changeable, and faithless. And as man, in accordance with his universal disposition, is furnished with greater power and strength, there appear in him, as frequent characteristics, hardness, vehemence, ruggedness, and regardlessness. Now against this, it is true, female gentleness and mildness forms a beneficent counterpart. But then, under cover of this, there is developed a fault of a different kind. As the woman is the weaker part, she cannot carry out her will simply by force, but endeavours to do so by craft. In indirect ways she gains influence and dominion, seeks to gain the mastery over the man, in order, by means of him, to execute her plans. Craft, dissimulation, intrigues, tricks, belong to the shady side of female nature. Lying, in many cases, comes more natural to her than to man, because the man does not need it in such a degree; and the first fib on earth was without doubt uttered by a woman. And as the craft of women is known from of old, so also female hatred and revenge. While the man opposes an open resistance to an inflicted insult or injury, the woman conceals and locks up her feelings in herself, cherishes often for long an implacable hatred, which awaits the opportunity for revenge; and this may be revealed in a shocking form. ("I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist," Mark vi. 25.) Altogether, experience establishes that the woman, as the weaker creature, is more easily corrupted than the man; and that when this corruption has begun, it develops much more rapidly in her than in the man, that the demoniac, the horrifying, the wild, likewise appear stronger in her than in him. Reference may be made for this in history to Herodias, to Jezebel, to the furies in the French Revolution.<sup>1</sup> But even these horror-exciting passions, this female wrath, this revengefulness, indicate what depth of feeling may open in the heart of woman, what a glow may pervade it, yea, and history shows us, in numerous examples and very various forms, what heroism for goodness the woman can display.

<sup>1</sup> Hirscher, *Christliche Moral*, II. 418 ff. (5 Aufl.).

We have only been able to confine ourselves to the most general features. Every attempt to characterize by certain definitions the difference of individuality between man and woman, can, even with the greatest detail, furnish but faint outlines, which only receive life through personal experience. But only the poet can paint them. And however frequently both man and woman have been depicted, yet daily experience will bring under our notice ever new features, for the theme is inexhaustible. But every one, man or woman, if actually concerned about self-knowledge, will certainly find in him or herself something of what is here mentioned, one or another of these "natural" virtues and—however one may know himself to be free and far from the extreme—these "natural" infirmities and faults, and that not as mere germs and possibilities, but as realities, which must be fought against, if one would aim at moral perfection. And if this self-examination be thoroughly prosecuted, it will conduce, in human nature itself, as it is common to man and woman, to make us conscious of a contradiction lying deeper, a contradiction which will more fully convince us that an earnest struggle is inevitable.

THE EARNESTNESS OF LIFE.—THE PURSUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

§ 6.

With the earnestness of the law and of duty begins also, in its deepest meaning, the earnestness of life. It has often been asked what earnestness means, and wherein it consists. We may reply, in general, that it is *necessity* that makes life earnest. The hard decrees of fate, the inexpugnable might of circumstances, these import earnestness into life; yea, and there are many who, already in childhood and early youth, for instance through the loss of parents and benefactors, through sickness and poverty, experience the earnestness of life. Passion also transports man into earnestness, in so far as he is dependent in that state upon a compelling, driving power, under which he is "passive," and quite unable to let go the object of his desire. But a necessity, an earnestness of a higher nature, is that which announces itself to our will,—the

necessity of the good, the *holy*, that of duty and of the problem of duty. Most men find the earnestness of life exclusively in adversities, in cares of life and debts, in sickness, nearness of death,—that is, in things that unquestionably may be called earnest. But, in a higher sense, the earnestness of life begins, however, with *the knowledge of the law*, and what is inseparable therefrom, *the knowledge of sin*. We can therefore say in two words, it is fate and duty that make life earnest. But our inmost longing is for this, that this earnestness of life may be transformed into *joy*, this necessity into *freedom*; for freedom alone makes man glad, and all the good tidings or gospels that reach men, be they true or false, are gospels of freedom, tidings of some liberation. We long to come again into a state in which we are without law, in which necessity has not indeed in every sense disappeared, but is no more a burden.

### § 7.

Thus the earnestness of my life ought to consist in this, that I do my duty, and not only do it, but in my *sentiments* become like the law. I am not only to do good, but myself to *be* good. I am to follow “righteousness,” by which we in the present connection understand the personal normality, a habit, a state, which is in harmony with what we ought to be by the requirement of duty and the ideal. With the earnestness of duty, the earnest question at the same time presses, How can I rid my nature of the inner schism? How can I get quit of this contradiction, which hinders me from doing good and being good? The ordinary answer we here meet is this: Thou must ethicize thy nature (cultivate it morally); thou must master it, make it an obedient organ for thy will, determined by duty and the ideal. Whether this answer is sufficient, whether this ethicizing, which in order to be thorough must coincide with perfect sanctification, is possible by man’s own means; whether the man is able through his own endeavour to cast out of his nature the inner schism, which manifests itself as always the deeper, the more we grow in the knowledge of the divine law—this *experience* must teach each one. A contribution towards the answer is here to be attempted, and that in such wise that

we fix our glance on the various forms in which the *righteousness of the law* appears. Not Israel alone has pursued this righteousness of the law, that is, a righteousness gained through man's own efforts to fulfil the law; but also the heathen pursued it, and pursue it, it is true only according to the measure of their knowledge of the law, in so far as they have no revealed law, but only that written in their heart; while Christians know the *righteousness of faith* by grace, whereby there begins another and new attitude to the law, another and new striving after its fulfilment. We here consider, as the chief manifestations, civil righteousness, philosophical righteousness, finally the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes.

#### THE CHIEF FORMS OF MORAL LIFE UNDER THE LAW.

##### CIVIL RIGHTEOUSNESS.—PARTICULARIST MORALITY.

### § 8.

The first step of the knowledge of the law which is here to be considered is that where the law is only known as regards single spheres of life, namely, those spheres nearest to the natural man: family, fatherland, and civil society. The feeling of duty, and the fulfilment thereof, are here limited to single ingredients of the good, but do not embrace the *whole* life of the personality. The individual here knows only special duties, but has not taken up *duty itself, the good itself*, into his sentiments. In view of the historical appearance of this morality, we designate it as "civil" righteousness—an expression with which one often combines a far too narrow and spiritless conception, wherefore it needs a fuller explanation. The morality of the Greeks and Romans, it is true, issued mainly in the state, in civil life; their virtue was above all civil virtue, by which, however, we must not think of a merely external obedience to the laws, but of an obedience such as is found among free citizens. It is well enough known that the Greek and Roman heathenism furnishes great and splendid examples of free devotion to the state, of enthusiastic and sacrificing love to the fatherland, combined with fidelity in the civil calling. Full justice is not, however, done to that heathen world, if it be assumed that there the personality



exclusively issued in this element, that the actually good remained limited to political ability and patriotic sentiment. Beside the patriotic and civil virtues, features of personal worth often also show themselves,—mildness, beneficence, temperance, chastity; although these virtues only occur as a beautiful addition accompanying (concomitant of) civil virtue as the chief. And however much marriage and the family life may have been profaned in heathenism, there also we meet with true moral family affection, attachment to the parental house and the domestic hearth, true love between man and wife, love between brothers and sisters, and filial piety. True, indeed, it may be said on the whole that this family love only formed a part of the love of country, yea, that in many cases it was callously sacrificed on the altar of the state, as by that Spartan mother who repelled her son who had returned safe from the battle, and then went into the temple to thank the gods for her son that had fallen in the field. Yet there are by no means lacking in heathenism examples of a family love, which is attested as true and genuine by its inner moral value. We may mention Coriolanus, who was standing in open conflict with his fatherland that had rejected him, and at the head of the Volscian armies appeared victorious before the walls of Rome, but renounced his vengeance, spared the city, and departed, because he could not resist the prayers and tears of a spouse and a mother. And Sophocles in his *Antigone* has painted before our eyes a picture of genuine filial love; how she, the tender virgin, in self-sacrificing love, accompanies her old blind guilt-laden father, King Œdipus, who unknowingly had killed his father and married his mother, and now, when after many years the horror has become manifest, wanders a fugitive from land to land, like a helpless beggar; how she addresses him as he heaves a deep sigh:

O father, lean thy hoary frame  
Upon thine own child's faithful hand!

how she unweariedly conducts him:

She, ever joyless, moves with me about,  
The old man's prop, often through forest wild.  
In want and hunger, barefoot, wandering,  
In showers of rain and in the sun's fierce glow,  
In misery, she seeks nor house nor hearth,  
If to her father but her care be given.

And that is the same Antigone who also shines as a pattern of sisterly love, while she, despite all threats, fulfils the duty of piety, and buries her brother, who, by strict command of the ruler, uncovered by the earth should have lain a prey to birds—she who against the law of the state, transgressed by her, appeals to the unwritten indestructible law, of which she says :

It is not of to-day, nor yesterday ;  
It lives for ever, none knows whence it is.

Assuredly we will not designate a thing like this a splendid vice. And just as little is it a mere civil virtue that here meets us. Filial and sisterly virtue is manifested in beautiful independence. And while this Antigone of poetry may be a solitary appearance, we are still at any rate, when the question is of the moral worth of heathenism, entitled to put the question, "Who knows how many Antigones, unnamed and uncelebrated, faded away because they lacked a poet?"<sup>1</sup>

We can point to still another element there, which does not issue in the merely civil and patriotic, namely *friendship*, in which precisely the free individuality and pure personal sympathies and interests assert themselves. In the antique world, friendship makes known an individuality that constitutes a beneficent opposition to the strict all-dominating socialism. Heathenism here shows us lofty examples of mutual, free devotion, mutual fidelity and sacrifice : Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias. And not unjustly has it been said, that what romantic love was in the Middle Ages, friendship was in ancient times, while the friends with enthusiasm recognised, admired, and loved an ideal of personality, each in the other.

But to the elements mentioned, civil virtue and love of country, family piety and friendship, heathen morality also remained essentially limited, till philosophy freed itself from these limits, and addressed its ethical requirement to the *whole* personality. Thus, if we have designated this sphere by the traditional expression as civil righteousness, this can only be understood of what is *predominant* in that sphere. More exactly we can designate it the particularistic morality,

<sup>1</sup> So Mynster, "Ueber das allgemeine Reich Christi," *Vermischte Schriften*, V. 136.

for this reason, that the personality is here limited to single parts of the moral, but does not yet know a morality embracing the whole man.

### § 9.

With the modification which is at once given in the contrast of the ancient and the modern world, the *particularist morality* is also repeated at the present day before our eyes in the midst of Christendom. Wherever one has become estranged from Christianity, one must just live on the basis of heathenism. It is true the difference here arises, that modern heathenism more or less recognisably bears the stamp of revolt, that it is torn away from a connection within which it should have its right place, wherefore also lasting reminiscences of what is Christian occur, while the old naive heathenism has far more a finished character, and depends on itself. And certainly we will not overlook that—even apart from the gospel of redemption—already, through progressive emancipation, the principle of humanity and personality has become the principle for the newer world. But all this notwithstanding, there are still a number of individuals, even in our time, in whom this principle of personality is only partly and piecemeal, as it were, only fragmentarily operative. Universal human rights are, it is true, the prevailing requirement of the time; that the limits of the nationality are now broken, that humanity stands higher than the nation, men have everywhere become conscious, or at least it is the prevailing utterance, view, and tradition. At the same time, however, it is by no means the customary and prevalent view, that now also the consciousness of *duty*, corresponding to the universal rights of man, should live in all, after its whole compass. In regard to the ethical development of their own personality, the consciousness of duty in very many is limited to single elements of the moral, and bound thereto, and we thus come back in the main to the same “elements” (Gal. iv. 3, 9) as in the ancient world.

Yet we dare not deny a relative value to this particularism. It must be acknowledged that in individuals who are estranged from Christianity, and whose religiousness altogether amounts to a minimum, civil virtue and devotion to the earthly calling,



self-sacrificing patriotism, family love, and true friendship may still be found. Those who occupy this standpoint, live mostly in the imagination that they are on the best terms with the true moral law, that they not only can fulfil it, but also actually do fulfil its requirements, although they allow the intermixture of some imperfection, inseparable from finitude and human weakness. "For what could be required of me more than that I conscientiously fulfil my calling, the work I am appointed to do in society, than that I, as it becomes a good citizen, love my fatherland and make the required sacrifices for it; than that I be penetrated by zeal for the common good, a zeal which extends to still other than mere general interests of the country, for instance, embraces also societies for benevolent objects; than that I be a good husband, a good father, friend, brother; in fine, prove by deed that I am faithful to my friends? If I manifest at the same time my reverence for the actually valid ecclesiastical ordinances and ceremonies, which are venerable to me as established ordinances of state, as native custom, I should think that more could not be required, and that I had now fulfilled all righteousness." That numerous individuals in the midst of Christendom occupy this standpoint, will hardly be denied by any. And even if in some individuals the virtues named appear in a more ideal form than with the majority, if even patriotic and civil virtues may be manifested, which from the side of human society deserve all respect and thankfulness, perhaps even monuments, if at the same time there are not lacking laudable and amiable domestic virtues; yet there ever attaches to the whole standpoint the same imperfection and limitation.

#### § 10.

But that this righteousness is inadequate, and very far removed from the personal normality, lies even in particularism itself. For this is a standpoint in which indeed single virtues are present, but not virtue itself. In it one is not conscious that the problem of man is not limited to being citizen, father, brother, friend, and so on, but above all is this: to be *man*. If the consciousness of duty is exhausted in single separate spheres of calling and life, there may be found

even along with a consuming and sacrificing activity of that kind, with great dutifulness and devotion in filling an appointed sphere, at the same time much self-will and obstinacy, much unrighteousness and inhumanity in other spheres, in which one is thought to be less bound, and to be at liberty to go his way. Every separate virtue has beside it a corresponding shadowy side, a corresponding fault; so long, that is, as there lacks the universally or genuinely human, which should form the unity in the life of a man, and place the single virtue in its right place and with its right limitation. How many are there whose patriotism, like that of the old heathen, only too clearly manifests its dark side in national boasting and national hatred! How many, whose domestic virtues and fidelity as friends do not restrain them from being hard-hearted, passionate, unjust, and unreasonable towards others, who do not just belong to the said narrower circle, as soon as these others become troublesome to them, or even get into conflict with them! Very many acknowledge no obligations beyond those which their class and their social position lay upon them, the observation of that which is manner and custom in their own circle, of that which fashion requires. To this is limited their dutiful conduct, their self-conquest. They keenly reproach themselves if they have once failed and made a mistake in this respect; while they regard it as something extraordinary, and what is not to be expected of them, nay, as "a superfluous merit," if they once and again show more than that conventional virtue, and bring an offering of a higher kind. They give themselves no time to consider and lay to heart their universal and human destination, whence it naturally follows that they conduct themselves coldly and egotistically towards other social classes. And as there are insects that spend their life upon a single leaf, and of all the world regard merely their leaf, and what occurs on it; so there are also individuals for whom the various circle of their personal, nearest relationships in life, and separate interests, is the universe.

Particularism appears in a form that often asserts itself with a nimbus of pre-eminent justification, when it presents itself as unconditional devotion to any calling in life, especially if the calling to which the individual devotes himself is of

higher and more ideal nature ; if one, as it is said, gives his life to an idea, be it an artistic, scientific, or political idea. Much is meant by this, according to the present view of people. In an ethical respect, however, it has but little importance. For the man is by no means entitled to devote his life unconditionally to any one other idea than that of the *good* ; the separate calling ought never to assert itself at the expense of the universal human one. But many have become famous as poets, artists, men of learning, politicians, and nevertheless occupy morally a very low, or at least limited, standpoint. In all belonging to their calling, one may find in them the finest feeling of duty, the greatest conscientiousness ; unweariedly they overcome all the difficulties and obstacles opposed to them ; subject themselves—of which there are to be found splendid examples in the history of the natural sciences, of explorations—to the utmost dangers and hardships. Nay, not only is their faithfulness manifested in great, but also in little things. They cannot allow themselves even the slightest neglect of that which belongs to the execution of their undertaking. On the other hand, outside this one sphere, their morality may much resemble a cloak full of holes, seeing they neglect the most urgent duties of private life, especially watchfulness over the development of their own personality. Johannes von Müller says : “ Who can be *man*, husband, father, friend, and yet write so immoderately many books ? ” To the patriot, the man of learning, the politician, the man is sacrificed, and life is sacrificed to the idea. The same thing recurs in the lower busy callings, where “ business ”—be it that of the official, the merchant, the mechanic—absorbs the life of the personality, and disturbs its development, nay, makes it impossible.

What induces a man to give up this ethical particularism, and to follow after a “ better righteousness,” is a deeper self-knowledge, or the discovery of his own ideal self, which is elevated above these specialties. We may also thus express this : he discovers in himself an unconditioned requirement of duty, a command of conscience, which does not resolve itself into this or that particular, but goes back into his inner depth, into the core of his being, where with the requirement a motive, an impulse is conjoined, by which he is compelled

to seek a *good* higher than all that is to be found in the state, in the family, or in any one special object whatever. For states and state-constitutions may perish. And even as the state, or otherwise, family and house may also fall a prey to dissolution through many events. Friends may become untrue to each other and separate, and sickness make a man unfit to exercise the duty of his calling. We must therefore seek a good that is unconditioned and unchangeable, sufficing and satisfying the ideal man hidden within us.

Considerations of this kind must, as one should suppose, lead directly to the need of religion and of faith. Yet experience teaches that they may lead to a purely ethical standpoint, which is no religious one as yet, on which at any rate religion has no foundational (constitutive) import. But the man, through raising himself to this higher degree of morality, comes in a deeper sense under the law; for the law from henceforth more and more augments its requirements.

#### PHILOSOPHICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

##### LIFE ACCORDING TO REASON.

### § 11.

After philosophical thought, that is to say, that which seeks the *universal*, had once awoke, first in the Greeks, then in the Romans, one had also necessarily to seek a better than civil righteousness. Testing, all-investigating thought will no longer receive the moral as a mere tradition, will not be arrested by the authority of society and of inherited custom (Socrates); but it leads men into their own inner being, in order by means of reason to discover the highest good, and the right way (art) of living. One now begins, more or less independent of civil limitation, to inquire for the law valid for the whole man, or the ideal of personality as such. And this asking and seeking forced itself still more on men's minds, like an inevitable necessity, when the decay of civil life and of old venerable customs, and therewith the decay of religion began; for with the ancients, religion with its myths formed only a component part of the life of the people and the state. It is philosophy, or the wisdom of the world, that is

now praised as the right means of virtue, the only way to righteousness and peace (happiness). "O philosophy, guide of life! discoverer of virtue and disperser of vices! what might I, what might the life of man in general, have become without thee? Thou hast founded the cities, invited men from dispersion to social life, united them first in houses, then through wedlock, then through exchange of writing and of oral speech, more intimately with each other. Thou wert the lawgiver, the teacher of manners and discipline. We take refuge in thee; of thee we seek help; we yield ourselves to thee with all our heart, and entirely! A single day lived rightly and according to thy commands is preferable to an eternity lived in sin (*peccanti immortalitati*). Whose help should I rather employ than thine? who hast granted me peace in life (*vitae tranquillitatem*), and hast banished the fear of death." Such is the enthusiastic exclamation of one of those ancients.<sup>1</sup> We are content here to name *Stoicism* as the most distinct type of philosophic righteousness. Amid unhappy world-conditions, the Stoics seek a firm and immoveable point within them, and make it their problem to gain the highest good by each one developing himself to personal perfection, herewith distinguishing between the things lying within and those that lie beyond our power. Although internally elevated above the state, they would not withdraw from the relationships of civil life, rather even in these special and lower relations, realize the ideal of the wise man, who, amid all changes, preserves unity and agreement with himself, with his own being and the law of the whole, and finds even in this the true happiness.

As an eminent example, we mention that philosopher upon the throne, the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, with the surname Antoninus, after his imperial foster-father. He has left us a writing well worth reading: *Meditations, Considerations, and Exhortations*, which he addressed to himself (*εἰς ἑαυτόν*), that is, moral monologues. He here declares he will act as man, as Roman, as statesman, will devote himself entirely to the present age; but under these relationships his highest problem is only to exercise that which agrees with his rational soul, to prove himself a citizen of the divine

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *Tuscul. Disput.*, V. 2.



state, namely, of the whole world; to work not merely outwardly but inwardly especially, and so to manipulate and form himself according to the doctrines of reason. "O my soul, if thou mightst but become good, true, unchangeable, so that thou mightst dare to show thyself naked (without hiding and mask)."<sup>1</sup> He is quite penetrated by the thought that virtue alone has worth; all else is transient. Short is the duration of time during which each one lives, petty the corner on earth where he lives, and even the most lasting fame is of small significance. It is a succession of wretched men through which the latter is propagated, men who will soon die, and neither know themselves nor the departed. Therefore the call is, Wake up! One meets with similar utterances in the books of his favourite Epictetus (a freedman), and of Seneca (the teacher of the Emperor Nero). Antiquity shows us women too who earnestly strove after their personal perfection, according to the principles of reason (for instance, Arria).

### § 12.

If we turn from antiquity to the more and most recent times, we find here an endeavour after the philosophical or rational righteousness in a tolerably large number of individuals, who, alienated from Christianity, apply themselves to a so-called "purely human" morality. The more progress that is made by emancipation, it becomes the more possible that, even apart from Christianity, an autonomous (self-legislating) morality be formed, although this cannot entirely withdraw itself from Christian reactions and influences. Not only do we find it in the philosophers proper (Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, and so on); not only in such as are specially cultured by philosophical studies. No, even outside the immediate influence of the schools, many at the present day are led to a kind of practical philosophizing through mediate influences, through the tendency to freedom of recent times, and through their own reflection. True, it must be allowed that among these emancipated ones, who, setting aside Christianity, praise the ideal of humanity, only a very few apply themselves to follow it practically, that is, in deed and truth. As in

<sup>1</sup> Compare Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, III. 875 ff.

ancient times the Epicureans, who merely pursued enjoyment and happiness, formed the majority, the Stoics again remained in the minority, so exactly is it also now. True, there are also a great number of people who adhere to a so-called morality of the *via media*, which will be more fully considered in the sequel. The few, however, who really pursue an ideal, and seek in earnest by the light of their reason, and through the power of their own will, to realize a personal perfection, come first to this, that they renew that Stoicism of the ancients, so far as this can appear under the modifying influences of the present everywhere. With more or less clearness, they will occupy the standpoint which Kant has thus formulated: *Duty*, and not merely this or that duty, but universal human duty, embracing the whole man, must be the highest norm for a life according to reason; this duty must be exercised for its own sake; every regard to happiness and external well-being must here disappear; I must be content to find internal satisfaction in the consciousness that I have done my duty as a man. We can also, however, express the same standpoint in a fuller, more comprehensive form, when we say, with Schleiermacher, who in his *Monologen* (1800) set forth with stoical enthusiasm an ideal of philosophical righteousness: every man ought to exhibit humanity in a peculiar manner; each one ought to work out his peculiar individuality, in and under his actual man fashion his ideal man; every one ought himself to will, agreeably to his ideal freedom, and in the midst of time, to lead an eternal life. "Begin, therefore, even now thine eternal life in constant self-contemplation; care not for what will come; weep not for what passes away; but care, not to lose thyself, and weep when thou rushest down the stream of time without bearing heaven in thee."

Now, however differently this ideal of personality may be modified, and in whatever varied individualized colours it may shade off, still the unconditioned duty, which in itself is not different from that ideal expressed as a requirement, will ever remain the essential thing which one herein has to keep in view. And for him who is concerned about its realization, *self-knowledge* must remain the first problem, which embraces not only the knowledge of my ideal, or of what I ought to



be, but of what I am in reality, of the obstacles that are here to be overcome, and of the aids available to me for this object.

## SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

## § 13.

All self-knowledge must be gained through contemplation, through quiet self-consideration and self-inspection, in which the universal human ideal gains for me a special, personal form, in that I recognise the same in its relation to my individuality, and so in relation to those dispositions, to that definite talent, to that limitation, to that sphere of life within which even I am to realize the universal-human. But however effective quiet self-consideration may be for self-knowledge, yet the latter will still remain merely one-sided, so long as it is not developed by means of practical life, so long as it does not teach us to know by experience as well the hindrances of our moral effort, as also the sufficiency or insufficiency of the means of progress that are at our command. A self-knowledge consisting in mere contemplation might be an exclusive knowledge of the ideal, without doing justice to reality. Our soul were exposed to illusion, as if it were in best agreement with its ideal, because, in the quiet and undisturbed hours of contemplation, it is enthusiastic for it, and in the transient state of its exaltation makes too little of the difficulties which have at any rate to be overcome, when it is required to incorporate the ideal in the hard and opposing material of reality.

As example of a self-knowledge mainly accomplished on the standpoint of the ideal and of contemplation, one may mention first the Stoic declamations on the wise man as alone king, an unlimited ruler, the only freeman among mere slaves, and again Schleiermacher's already mentioned famous *Monologue* (a modern *εἰς ἑαυτόν*). Schleiermacher will here depict himself from a purely ethical standpoint, after the standard of his ideal. Against the attacks called forth by these so lofty pictures of himself, he urged that one must distinguish between what a man is according to his ideal and his caricature. But only the self-contemplation that is absorbed in the ideal, con-

tains, in his view, what is adapted for publication, while a self-contemplation in the opposite direction—namely, aiming at the caricature—loses itself too much in the obscurities and nooks of the personal life, down to those points which, as a wise man of the old time said, a man does well to hide even from himself. The last sentence, notwithstanding the authority quoted for it, we cannot approve. For it is the very problem of every one who has planned his life ethically, to become quite familiar with himself, evident to himself; whereas he who has not planned his life ethically, will have many points and parts in his outer and inner life which he not only wishes to hide from others, but also from himself.<sup>1</sup> But above all, we must assert the position, that for a right self-knowledge it is not enough to know one's ideal, but also to have a thorough acquaintance with one's own caricature, which it is of importance to get rid of, that the ideal may admit of being realized. It is not with the ethical ideal as with the æsthetical, so that it were enough for it merely to hover before our fancy. It requires real existence.

It is thus his ideal which the speaker of the *Monologue* depicts when he says, "With proud joy I still think of the time when I found the consciousness of humanity, and knew that I now would never lose it more. From within came the high revelation, called forth by no doctrines of virtue and no system of the wise; a clear moment crowned the long search which not this and not that would satisfy; freedom solved the dark doubts through action. I dare say it, that I *have never since lost myself* (!). What they call conscience, I know as such no more; no feeling so punishes me, none needs so to warn me. In quiet rest, in unchanging simplicity, I bear uninterruptedly the consciousness of the whole of humanity in me. Gladly and light of heart, I often survey my conduct collectively, certain that *I will never find anything that reason must deny.*" Or when he solemnly swears eternal youth to himself, when he requires of himself to be ever present with blossoms and with fruits, to wed youth with old age, the ripeness of age with the freshness of youth. In this ideal self-contemplation he exclaims, "It is this in which I greatly rejoice,

<sup>1</sup> It is no doubt superfluous to remark, that in all this we are only speaking of the *Monologue*, but not at all of Schleiermacher as a whole.

that my love and friendship is never of ignoble origin, never mixed with any common sensation, ever the purest act of freedom. Never has benefit gained my friendship, nor beauty my love; never has sympathy so mastered me as to impart merit to misfortune, and to present sufferers to me as other and better; never has agreement in particulars so laid hold of me, that I have ever deceived myself regarding the deepest inner difference." Or, "Ever shall sorrow and joy, and what else the world designates as weal and woe, be alike welcome to me, while each in its own way fulfils this object, and reveals to me the relations of my being. If I only attain this, what does happiness matter to me? I have felt joy and pain, I know every grief and smile; and what is there amid all that befell me since I began really and truly to live, from which I have not appropriated what is new to my being, and have gained power that nourishes the inner life?"

Such a one will he be. Such sentiments will he confirm within him. His earnest effort is to go through with this mode of action. He is quite conscious that he does not correspond in reality to these descriptions; and injustice has been done when it has been said of him that, like a Narcissus, he would reflect himself merely in his own excellence. Nevertheless we must acknowledge a great one-sidedness herein, that in these monologues, this *εἰς ἑαυτόν*, as good as nothing occurs concerning the reality, and concerning the contradiction between ideal and reality, nothing of the hindrances to the accomplishment of the ideal, nothing of the helps to be here employed. For he indeed says, "Shame upon thee, free spirit, that one thing in thee should serve the other; nothing must be for thee a means." But then, what avails us the feeling of freedom on the heights of the ideal, when we yet in actual life need crutches? when we still must say with Claudius, "Footsalve! Man of Sinope! My gouty feet cannot accompany you." However many in their youth have strengthened and kindled their enthusiasm for the ideal through those monologues, have received an impulse to a higher moral development of their personality, yet it can scarcely be denied that through such a monologizing, through such a self-idealizing, we get a far too optimistic view of ourselves, and of what we in virtue of our freedom could accomplish, what

a "temple of morality" we could erect in ourselves. As a practical counterpoise, one might read Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus with profit, just because both these Stoics, unlike many others, do not express themselves in declamation, in mere praises of the wise man, fix their glance not exclusively on the ideal, which fills the mind with the consciousness of human elevation and dignity, but constantly compare reality with the ideal, and thereby pave the way to humility. "Thou wilt soon die," says the philosopher on the throne to himself, "and hitherto thou hast neither become upright nor free from disquiet, from the fear of being injured by things that exist outside of thee. Thou art still not placable towards all; thou still dost not make thy wisdom alone consist in living justly." Epictetus also in several passages utters his deep grief for the contrast between ideal and reality. "Ah," he says, "show me a Stoic! By the gods, I long to see one. But it is quite out of your power to show me one who is really well-marked (perfect and cast in one piece). Show me, then, at least one who lies in the crucible in order to be cast. Pray do me this kindness. Pray refuse not to an old man, from ill-will, the sight of a spectacle that I have not seen till now."<sup>1</sup>

From the cheerful heights of the ideal we will therefore descend to the plains of reality, and enter somewhat more closely upon the hindrances to the pursuit of perfection, and on the means to be employed.

*The Internal Contradiction in Human Nature.*

§ 14.

If we inquire after the hindrances to the higher morality, a thorough self-knowledge cannot rest content with the merely individual, the individual temperament, and so on, but must revert from the individual nature to universal human nature, from the many hindrances which we find in our individuality, to the one universal chief hindrance common to all men. If thou wilt know thyself, thou must know man.

<sup>1</sup> *Diatrib.* II. 19, 24 ff.; Harless, *Ethik*, 7 Aufl. p. 113 (translated in Clark's *Foreign Theological Library*).

How, then, do we designate this chief hindrance, this hostile power present in us, which we have to combat under its many eternally changing appearances, and which individualizes itself in every one of us? Many have named *sense* as this enemy, and conceived the inner schism of human nature, of whose presence we are reminded in so many ways, as a schism between sense, as the unreasoning part of our being, and reason. But sense in itself cannot be called bad, although evil frequently clothes itself in the form of sense. We must seek the enemy of which we speak deeper down and behind sense, namely, where the egoistic *will* has its seat. Each one may convince himself of this, that he is related to his evil lusts and inclinations, by no means like a suffering innocence which opposes to all evil allurements a pure and uncorrupted will, but that his will is also implicated in those lusts. We by no means discover in ourselves a merely weak will, but also an impure will, in which egoistic motives are mingled with those of duty. And hast thou ever noticed in thyself, perhaps with horror, features of ill-will, hatred, falseness, malice; hast thou ever had occasion in thyself and others to find the confirmation of La Rochefoucauld's often quoted saying, that in the misfortune of our best friends there is still something that does not entirely displease us: then thou knowest something also of the *will* that has pleasure in evil as such. Every one who goes to the bottom of himself will further discover that the egoistic will in us is not of to-day or yesterday; that, on the contrary, we find it present in our first obscure remembrances, and that it expresses itself preponderantly, either in the region of pride or in that of sense.

This will is the chief hindrance with which we have to contend. For even the before-mentioned one-sided dominion of the temperaments is at bottom connected with the perverted egoistic will, which establishes itself in that mingling of elements of soul and body which we designate temperaments. The Sanguinist *will* flutter from flower to flower, *will* have such an unsteady and flighty being. The Melancholist *will* hold fast his sad humour, and plunge into his gloom, nourishes it incessantly with new food, however much he suffers under it. The Cholericist *will* carry through his will, his object, even if he should perish in the attempt. The Phlegmatist *will* con-



tinue in his slothful rest. The same holds of the faults considered above, which cleave to the male and the female nature. In each of them, for instance in the man's ambition and the woman's vanity, the man's hardness or regardlessness, and the woman's craft and mendacity, an egoistic will is expressed, with the enticement to follow only the commands of egoism, of self-love, of self-pleasing, a will that can only be broken by a higher will, that is one with the will of the reason. The inner schism, the inner contradiction in human nature, we can therefore also designate as the double will. That is, it is the schism between my ideal rational will and my egoistic will, whereby I cease to be at one with myself. What must be rooted out are not the impulses,—these have only to be ordered and governed,—but the perverted direction of the will. This must cease, if I am to attain unity and agreement with myself.

One of the deepest and most honourable thinkers of the newer humanism, Kant, has named this chief hindrance of the good in us *the radical evil*, by which he understands a deeply rooted inclination of human nature to give the preference to the maxim (the principle) of egoism, before the maxim of morality,—an inclination which is evil in itself, because it cleaves to our will, and must thus also be imputed to us. Accordingly, he teaches that human nature bears in itself a root bad in a moral sense, from which the whole multiplicity of faults and vices springs up. As chief forms of evil he adduces the following: the weakness (*infirmitas*) of human nature, when one has indeed accepted the maxim of the good, but does not stand his ground in the performance, and obeys the maxim of egoism; then the uncleanness (*impuritas*) of the human heart, when one follows indeed the maxim of morality, but not purely, because we will not follow it except mingled with motives of self-love; further, the badness and corruption (*vitiositas*) of the human heart as such, when one actually and consciously appropriates the maxim of egoism, and that as the highest, to which that of morality must be subordinated according to circumstances.<sup>1</sup> From the merely human standpoint, there could hardly be possible a

<sup>1</sup> Kant, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (Werke, X. 30 ff. Ausgabe von Rosenkranz).



deeper insight into the essence of the inner schism of human nature than that which Kant has developed in his treatise *Of the Radical Evil*, a treatise usually ignored by those who otherwise gladly appeal to Kant. Only Christianity helps us to comply in the right sense of the word with that old holy requirement, "Know thyself!" Christianity teaches us that the inner contradiction and schism of human nature lies still deeper, that it is not only a conflict between the rational will of man and his egoistic will, but a conflict between *man's* and *God's* will; that the original relation of man to God is disturbed; that the fundamental and chief hindrance, which must first be taken out of the way, is disunion (discord) with God, and that only then can one think of likewise removing the disunion (discord) of man with himself.

But self-knowledge is chiefly and essentially gained through experience. And he who uprightly and earnestly pursues rational righteousness and harmony with himself, will in this way also certainly attain a *preparatory* self-knowledge. Even where the law (the moral command) is only acknowledged and understood as the law of our reason, that truth must be proved and confirmed, although in lower form, which the apostle announces: "The law cannot give life, but by the law comes the knowledge of sin."

*Struggling Virtue and Insufficient Means.—Bondage of Duty.*

§ 15.

Thus, in order that we may attain to harmony with ourselves (to inner peace), it is necessary that the schism and conflict between the two wills existing in us—in which is included the schism between reason and morality—should be done away. That this harmony with ourselves is only to be gained through the most earnest struggles, that virtue, in order to reach its ideal, must first appear to us as *struggling* (not merely as springing up after divine order and power), needs no discussion. But what helps do we possess, on our merely human standpoint, to gain the victory?

It would evidence an imperfect knowledge of human

nature were it to be thought that the mere *knowledge* of the good is an adequate means of becoming virtuous, and that the struggle which must be waged for this is essentially only a struggle against errors and prejudices. And yet even a Socrates entertained this heathenish-naive illusion. He thought that if men are bad, the reason of it lies not in their will, but in their ignorance; that if men could only be brought to the right knowledge of the good, they would also entirely love it, and would perceive it to be unreason and folly to pursue seeming good, whereupon reason without further ado would attain the dominion in them. This false conception is still widely diffused at the present day, it being thought that through enlightenment and progressive culture, men and the world will become better. And yet experience teaches that it is not so, that although now in the long course of centuries an infinite fulness of the means of culture and enlightenment has been heaped together, all these means have proved inadequate to ameliorate mankind. Not a few of those who had lived in that superficial belief have afterwards, with bitter lamentations, confessed their illusions. "So long as I believed," says one who with all earnestness had pursued rational righteousness,—“so long as I believed that improvement depended merely on the correction of our errors of understanding, and that therefore men must become better and happier through enlightenment of their understanding, so long was the ultimate perfection of our race upon this earth probable to me; but now, when I daily experience that the most prudent men so often fail, that men whose theories are the best give themselves to vices, all faith in the attainment of that ideal of virtue has died out of me. Yes, if it were principles that made us villains, then the faults might lie in perverted conceptions, and we would be better when these were corrected. But how can enlightenment make weak powers strong, unhealthy powers healthy? how can it transmute unnature and an artificial state into nature and simplicity? No, genuine goodness is no necessary consequence of the enlightenment of the understanding; it can only dispel follies, but not vices.”<sup>1</sup>

Knowledge is no doubt indispensable. But beyond know-

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Perthes, *Leben*, I. 53.

ledge a *power* is required by which knowledge may become operative. In our present natural state there is found in us all, in relation to our knowledge of the good, a "deficiency," a *minus* of power to will and to perform it. It is a *chief phenomenon* of human nature, that between our knowing and willing there exists a mis-relation, in that our knowing is ever far in advance of our willing, in which, however, the good should find its very existence, and that the right insight must only too often be witness how the will acts contrary to its requirements. He who strives after the moral ideal, will indeed experience that there are certain virtues the exercise of which is easy and natural to him—that is, when his ethical virtues are supported by the corresponding natural ones; but that there are also others which he, despite his better insight, is not able in practice to appropriate, or else the appropriation of which costs him the greatest effort. It is natural to him, for example, to show ability and fidelity in his calling, and he is in a position also to make sacrifices for ideal objects; he cannot, however, and that notwithstanding better knowledge, bear mortifications and neglects, cannot forgive and forget, although he perfectly perceives that he should. He is industrious, and work is his pleasure; but to manifest patience and resignation in suffering is exceedingly difficult for him, and on the sickbed he loses courage. Or there are certain humours, certain moods which sometimes come upon him and make him disinclined to work, as well as to social intercourse, certain suddenly emerging fancies which he cannot escape inclining to again and again. Or there are certain sensual enjoyments which he absolutely cannot deny himself, and that notwithstanding he has long and certainly known that they are injurious to his health. Especially there is a particular fault which he discovers in himself, and justly may call his chief fault (bosom sin), whether it shows itself in a sensual or more mental direction, and which constantly returns, however often it may have been expelled. In all these points mere knowledge evinces itself as paralyzed and quite unfruitful. Knowledge, or what is the same thing, the ideal will which utters itself in knowledge or the moral consciousness, needs a *power* in order that it may become operative. But this element of power, this personal element

of nature, through which alone the will can become the deed and embody itself, this element of productive genius through which the ideal will can alone spring forth with effect and realize itself, is just that which is wanting.

One often speaks of weak hours and weak moments; and who has not such? But these are not hours of ignorance or unconsciousness, but of powerlessness, whereby it is not excluded that they are likewise hours and moments of unfaithfulness, in which we become untrue to ourselves and to our good purposes, times of perfidy, in which we betray the good within us to the evil, and pass over to the enemy. In such moments, passion uses the right of the stronger and effects its requirements, even because the good in us is a mere idea, and duty only an ideal requirement, while passion has flesh and blood. Temptation promises enjoyments which—even if they be recognised by the reason as deceit and delusion—yet for covetous sense, for my lust, have in the present moment the highest reality. The tempter pays ready money, and affords immediate satisfaction, be it for my sensual lust or my choler, or any other passion, while the inner voice that speaks through conscience and duty only draws a bill on the future or on eternity. In such hours, knowledge appears weak and powerless, “pale with thought,” and shadowy, while temptation emerges bodily, and strikes my eyes with the blinding colours of the present. How, then, am I to begin to make my rational knowledge naturally powerful and operative, so as to be not merely a cold, feebly shining, and, as it were, expiring light, but a light from which kindling, powerful effects proceed to burn up the bad in me? How do I attain to the unity of knowledge and power, of idea and nature, of duty and inclination, of virtue and impulse, to the harmony of the self-conscious and the unconscious?

#### § 16.

Aristotle, who blames Socrates because the latter was of the opinion that mere knowledge itself carries the power of the good in it, emphasizes indeed himself the indispensableness of knowledge, but recommends beside it as a weighty help: to educate the will through *exercise, custom*. As one

only becomes a builder by building houses, as one only becomes a cithern-player by playing on the cithern, so, he says, we become more just by dealing justly, become more temperate by exercising temperance, and so on. Through exercise and custom, through the continued repetition of the same actions, a readiness is gained, the natural inclinations, or the irrational (*alogic*) part of our being, is gradually brought under the dominion of the rational part, so that reason and nature, virtue and impulse, the ethical and the physical, thenceforth work together. This is incontestably an excellent direction, especially when the exercise can be begun even in childhood. But here there arises a very great difficulty. For *before* I took courage to think philosophically, *before* I began to plan my life ethically, I already possessed one or other bad habit, which over against the new effort had the right of antiquity, and a claim on me of priority. And through habit not merely the good, but also the evil and bad as well, becomes a second nature. Not only the mental organs, but also the bodily, especially the nerves, acquire through repetition a definite inclination to the same movements. Consequently it will, at any rate, cost great effort to drive the bad habit from the field by the good. For mental and moral exercises must here go hand in hand with bodily.<sup>1</sup>

But even granting that this relatively succeeded, and the earnest effort for this end led to joyful experiences of progress gained,—and that in this way much is attainable, the history of the old heathenism itself proves to us, which affords admirable examples of moral self-conquest and self-control,—still the most important part would remain. For by accustoming oneself to right *dealings*, and exercising them to the point of readiness, there will only be something external, so to say, merely the bodily appearance of rectitude and virtue produced; yet the righteousness that I pursue is not only a righteousness of work, but of *sentiment*, which ought to be the soul of the whole external multiplicity. But how do I attain the rightful sentiment? For only too often I catch myself in what Kant designates partly the impurity of the

<sup>1</sup> Compare Luthardt, *Ethik des Aristoteles*, and the *Moral des Christenthums* of the same, p. 46. Sailer, *Christliche Moral*, I. 220.



human heart, partly the dim mixture of motives. Here, then, there is needed an exercise of a higher kind, and to this special attention must be directed. According to Kant's direction, we must confirm in ourselves the immovable principle, not merely to will to act in external harmony with duty, but *from duty*, that is, from respect to the law. Respect is a feeling in which nothing at all sensual or egoistic is contained. It is exclusively filled with the objective value of the object. We are *compelled* in our conscience to respect the law, as you are compelled to respect an honest man, even granting that you do by no means love him. This respect, which is inseparably combined with respect for the moral worth of our own nature, and which has the consequence that we voluntarily subject ourselves, purely for the sake of duty; to the compulsion of duty—this it is which we must exercise. In the degree that this respect gains the dominion over all other feelings and inclinations, our moral sentiment becomes pure.

### § 17.

That the sentiment here recommended is worthy of respect we in no way deny, nor do we deny that a respectable, moral conduct may proceed from it. And yet we must declare the motive of respect entirely inadequate to procure for us the essential thing: peace, inner harmony, and agreement with ourselves. For we are thereby thrown back upon that contradiction between duty and inclination, virtue and impulse, which we were labouring to overcome. It belongs precisely to the deep-rooted contradiction in our nature, that we men often find ourselves in the position that we cannot love what we yet are compelled to respect, and, contrariwise, although under self-reproaches, must love what we cannot respect. Only when respect and love are combined—only when I actually love with my whole heart what I am compelled to respect, love even that which I am bound in duty to obey, and love nothing but what I must likewise respect—then only is there peace and harmony within me. But who is to give me love and enthusiasm? who is to give me a heart that is entirely of the same kind and sentiment as the requirement of the law, so that it stands in no secret opposition to the



law, even although it forces itself to obedience and subjection? We speak here not of a love in this or that special direction, as it was to be found in the old heathen, but of a central love, which, from the centre of the heart, spreads itself out on all sides over the whole periphery of existence, a love which embraces the clear consciousness of the good in itself, but also the power to will what at the same time bears the stamp of the highest freedom and the highest natural necessity, and which gladly, willingly, and with joy, fulfils all that the law requires ("a gladsome, happy heart," as Luther says). But so long as this union of respect and love is lacking, virtue can only be compelled and whipped out with the rod, and the bad inclinations and evil desires of the heart only held back by the bridle and rein, of duty.

This, in a moral sense, unworthy, ungenial, and untalented slavish state, where the living spring from which genuine virtue must flow is not present, and where we must incessantly ply ourselves with rod and bridle, is most strictly a state *under the law*, in the *bondage of duty*—a state of discord and of division, proceeding from the man's own twofold will. I do my duty, but with inner resistance; for my willing and desiring, my whole heart's longing strives for the side opposed to my duty, and must therefore be constantly reined in and restrained. Who has ever learned such a state from experience, and not sooner or later felt himself weak and tired, to be thus enslaved under the yoke of duty? Who has not known hours in which he felt himself tempted to shake off this yoke, to give up his fruitless effort after a still unattainable ideal of virtue, and to seek happiness in other ways, joining in the poet's word:

"This fight I can no longer fight—  
The giant fight of duty."

But no more does man reach the goal of happiness by turning his back upon duty. In the course of action to which he then gives himself, he feels himself quite condemned to discord. Does he satisfy his sensual impulse, his lust, his natural heart's wishes, he must pay for ("expiate") this satisfaction by living on under the unrest and the reproaches of conscience; and, contrariwise, does he satisfy the requirement of conscience, he must suffer internally through the

sting and the unrest of impulse, through the desires incessantly assailing him, the tempting fancies and wishes which, even if they be held down and quenched, are yet to be compared to a subterranean fire, constantly on the point of flaming up again, and never letting him find peace.

*Æsthetic Education.*

§ 18.

There is still one means which may be tried as a last resource, and on which great hopes have been set. The ideal of a harmonious morality hovered even before the Greeks, in which the good is blended with the beautiful (Plato). It was thought that a combination of the ethical and the æsthetic would be the means to remove the schism between duty and inclination, and to reduce the double being in our nature to unity, that this end would be reached by combining the moral with the æsthetic education of man.

It is Schiller who has inspired many of the noblest spirits with this thought. He "was born in Arcadia," and bore within him the consciousness of a lost Paradise, along with the longing to regain it, while Christianity had become strange to him and far removed. His deep ethical nature and his inquiring spirit both led him to the Kantian philosophy. But however inspired he was for this ideal view of duty, which is to be obeyed unconditionally for its own sake, yet his poetic nature could not be reconciled to the cold command of duty, to that compulsion, that hardness, that Spartan discipline that frightened away every grace. But from the sphere of Christianity he had retained a remembrance, at least one remembrance,—namely, that it promises and desires, instead of slavish fear, in obedience to the law, which with threatenings was given amid the thunders of Sinai, to evoke a free inclination or willingness, namely love, and by this to free man from the bondage of the law. Now Schiller would produce this free inclination by a means which he does not take from Christianity, but from the ancient heathenism, from the Greeks.

He is indeed conscious that the æsthetic is unable to pro-

duce the moral, which must have its ground in itself, but thinks it can support it and work along with it, and prepare man to be a fitter organ for morality. Morality may, he says, be supported in two ways: either by strengthening the power of the reason, and of the good will, so that no temptation can overcome them; or by breaking and weakening the power of temptation, so that even a weak but good will may be more than a match for it. In the one respect as in the other, the sense of the beautiful, the feeling of beauty, will work as a support and furtherance. The natural enemy of morality is, according to Schiller, low sensual impulse. But the power of this is weakened, nay, broken, through æsthetic culture. For taste requires moderation and respect, form and limitation; it abhors all that is rude and formless, and sympathizes only with the well-formed and harmonious. Men who are destitute of æsthetic culture have thus, he thinks, to undergo a severer struggle with sensuality than the æsthetically cultured, in whom the sensual impulse is ennobled by the sense of beauty. The moral man without æsthetic culture has in his struggles against temptation only a court of first instance to which he can adhere, namely duty; while he who is likewise æsthetically cultured has another court besides, namely taste, which tells him that the bad which he must oppose is at the same time the ugly, the impure, the disagreeable, something therefore that offends the sense of form; and so the æsthetic interest here co-operates with the moral for the same object. If order, harmony, completeness, and perfection are required on the side of duty, they are at the same time an æsthetic requirement. In this co-operation of the æsthetic and the ethical, duty is wedded to inclination, and thus a harmonious character is formed.

Yet the man cannot attain a harmonious morality in the sense that an *immediate* harmony between reason and sense, duty and inclination, always comes to pass. In a world in which need and death rule, and in which the requirement is so often addressed to man to suffer, to endure, worthily to bear what cannot be altered, this is a thing impossible. The harmonious can then only be shown in this, that the man even in suffering preserves unity, full agreement with himself. Therefore æsthetic education must not only develop the sense for the *beautiful*, but also for the *lofty*.

A beautiful character is he who with ease exercises the virtues which circumstances require of him: righteousness, benevolence, moderation, fidelity; and who, in a happy and contented existence, finds his joy in the exercise of these duties. Who but must find such a man amiable, and love him in whom we meet the full unison of the natural impulses and the prescriptions of reason? But now, let a great misfortune, an immense disaster, suddenly enter this man's life; let him lose his whole fortune, and his good name besides; let him be stretched on a bed of suffering, or let those who are dearest to his heart be snatched from him by death, and all in whom he trusted leave him. If he then still remains the same that he was in prosperity; if even a severe misfortune has detracted nothing from his sympathy in others' suffering and sorrow, the experience of ingratitude has not embittered him against men; when it is thus only the circumstances that have altered, but not his sentiment, then we admire the *loftiness*, the dignity of his character. The feeling of the lofty is a mixed feeling. In it we are penetrated with a living consciousness of the weakness and dependence, of the limitation and transitoriness of our own nature. But there is likewise excited a feeling of joy and of internal elevation. We feel that in our being there is an independent, an eternal, an enduring, and unchanging part, over which the whole world of the senses, with all its changes, has no power. Now, although the æsthetically lofty by no means always coincides with the morally lofty, yet it belongs to the development of our humanity to cultivate our sense of it also, and to make ourselves familiar with it, because it gives an elevation to our spirit that adapts us for morality.

In order to cultivate our sense of the beautiful and the lofty, Schiller directs us first to nature and the life in close communion with it. To natural beauty there belongs a truth and *naivete*, a simplicity and plainness, which forms a contrast to all that is artificial and falsified in the life of man, and that would constantly force itself upon us. Therefore it tends to cleanse and purify, while it likewise harmoniously attunes the mind, and inclines it to strive after a similar harmony in ourselves. A steady and true love to nature prepares a good soil for the moral seed-corn, as it also bears witness to an originally

good nature that is favourable for moral culture. But just as well as this sense of the beautiful, the graceful and lovely, we must also cultivate our sense of the lofty in nature. A glance away into the endless distance of the horizon, or aloft to the mountains extending higher than the eye can reach, the contemplation of the starry heaven, or of the boundless ocean, are educational in an ethical sense, a preparation or incitement to improvement, so far as we thereby are elevated from the petty existence which in daily life would confine and tie us up; because we thus became conscious of our littleness, as well as of the insignificance of so many of our wishes; because thereby the feeling of the unconditionally lofty and great, that we carry in our own breast, is awakened. Who could well—provided that he is of a somewhat well-disposed nature—still cherish and nurse in grand natural surroundings, or while gazing up to the sublime starry heaven, his petty vain thoughts that revolve round his own self, his own littleness? On the contrary, it may confidently be said that such elevated natural surroundings are fitted to evoke far-reaching thoughts of light in a human brain, and to awaken in a human heart heroic purposes and conclusions, thoughts and efforts such as are hardly bred in gloomy cities, in the narrow study, or in splendid drawing-rooms. And not only should man make himself acquainted with creative and preserving nature, but not less with destroying nature also, which regardlessly annihilates its own works, pulls down great and small into the same destruction, and so often, by lightning and earthquake, by eruptions of volcanoes, by inundations and hurricanes, destroys the lives of many thousands of men and the works of their hands. For he who acquaints himself with such phenomena, will at the same time become familiarized with the thought of his own dependence and helplessness, but also with the idea that dwells within us of that spiritual freedom which raises him above all these things, and opens to the spirit an asylum in a higher order of things.

Yet nature is a mere lower school for the contemplation of the lofty. The right school is *history*, which presents to us the awfully glorious spectacle of a change of things destroying all, and restoring, and then again destroying. History unrolls before us the great pathetic pictures of humanity as



it lies struggling with fate, pictures of countless change of fortune, of the false security of man, of disappointed calculations and mistaken carelessness, of triumphant unrighteousness and of vanquished innocence,—deeply moving scenes, which the tragic art by its imitations makes to pass before us. What man, not quite morally abandoned, can well behold the long, obstinate, but often vain struggles of heroes, statesmen, and entire peoples,—struggles for a high historical goal, but which resolved itself into humiliation, yea into nothing,—who can tarry by the overthrow of kingdoms and cities, by the ruins of Syracuse and Carthage, without bowing trembling before the severe law of necessity, without instantly bidding his low desires be silent? without feeling himself impressed by this eternal inconstancy and unfaithfulness prevailing in all that is visible, without grasping something enduring, firm, unchangeable, and immoveable within himself?

But æsthetic education is only finished by *fine art*, which in its creations places the ideal before our eyes, and that freed from the accidental additions and limitations with which in reality it is burdened. That is to say, while we appropriate the beautiful in the works of art, especially of poetry, make it our internal property, it becomes thereby, as it were, a component part of our own being, and we are thereby likewise fitted to introduce it into our own life, and to bring our actions into harmony with the good. In familiarizing ourselves with the lofty, with the pathetic representations of the tragic art, we likewise become familiar with the world of spirit, with the law of the spiritual world that rules in our own breast; we are prepared and strengthened to endure the trials of life. Just in this consists the ethically, not merely purifying, but ennobling and internally strengthening power of the tragic art, that it acquaints us with the earnestness of life, and shows how the same is transformed into true spiritual freedom. In actual life it habitually occurs, that misfortune surprises man and finds him defenceless. But misfortune, as poetry presents it to us, serves as a means of education, in order not to be surprised by actual misfortune; and in awakening our consciousness of eternity, in setting in motion our freedom of will, that independent principle ruling within us, it raises us above the temporal, visible, and sensual, and



educates us to bear actual misfortune with dignity. The oftener we, through yielding ourselves to the influence of the pathetic, renew this inner act of freedom, this inner elevation above fate, the sooner and more entirely this becomes a *readiness*, so much the greater advantage does it gain over sensual impulse. And then, when at last the æsthetic misfortune comes to be an actual one, the spirit is able to deal again with the actual as an æsthetic, and—wherein the highest flight of human nature consists—to resolve actual suffering into a lofty emotion. It may therefore be said that by means of the pathetic, of which we become partakers through the tragic art, an *inoculation* takes place, in which inevitable fate is inoculated into us, and thereby loses its evil character.

And as the *theatre*, the dramatic stage, unites all arts in one great total effect, it is, as regards its true meaning and destiny, to be viewed as a *moral institution*, whose effect is at once to ennoble and to free, to educate and to amuse. As certainly as sensuous representation has a mightier effect than the dead letter and cold education, the effect of the stage is likewise deeper and more abiding than cold morals with its dry dogmas, whether the stage show us duty in a bewitching vesture, depict before our eyes virtues that elevate and transport the mind, vices that fill it with horror and amazement; or whether in comedy it represents follies and weaknesses that excite our laughter, while we ourselves at the same time receive secret warnings, which, although we feel ourselves hit, are yet not disagreeable, and do not make us blush. And not only does the stage direct our attention to men and human characters, but also to the course and the form of earthly lots; and it teaches us, as above said, to bear them, familiarizes us with the manifold human sufferings, which, when they occur in real life, will not find us unprepared. Therefore the theatre, more than any other institution in the state, is a school of practical wisdom, a finger-post through life, a key to the human soul, that here confesses its inmost secrets. And if it collects its spectators from all circles, from all classes; if thus all differences by which men are in social relation divided from each other here vanish,—all filled with the same sympathy, in which they forget themselves

and the rest of the world, and come nearer their heavenly origin; if each individual enjoys the same rapture that all enjoy, and has now only room for one feeling in his breast, namely, that he is a *man*; then certainly the theatre may with full right and reason be called a temple of humanity.

We have in the preceding endeavoured to reproduce in general outlines Schiller's doctrine of æsthetic education.<sup>1</sup> Now this remains the chief ethical question: whether such æsthetic education is able to beget a really harmonious morality, and to free man from the bondage of the law and of duty above discussed.

### § 19.

First of all, we must set forth certain limiting conditions, without which the æsthetic education commended to us absolutely cannot take place. The difficulty soon appears that the æsthetic may not merely be promotive of, and co-operative with, the ethical, but that it also presents hindrances and dangers which have to be avoided and combated. Schiller himself has drawn attention to this, by which he proves his uprightness and moral earnestness, but likewise also has done his part to weaken confidence in the belauded means. I mean, although this is common to both interests, the æsthetic and the moral, that each is an interest for something of universal import, that both raise man above the merely egoistic point of view; yet there is this great difference, that the æsthetic interest is essentially an interest of the imagination, and only requires that the form, the phenomenon, the surface, fully reflect the contents, no matter what sort of contents they be. The æsthetic interest is equally lively in the terrifying as in the lovely and peaceful scenes of nature, if only these natural scenes bring to view the phenomenon

<sup>1</sup> We refer here not only to the *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, Letters on the Æsthetic Education of Man; but especially to his treatises, *Ueber den moralischen Nutzen ästhetischer Sitten*, On the Moral Use of Æsthetic Customs; *Ueber das Erhabene*, On the Lofty; *Ueber Anmuth und Würde*, On Grace and Dignity; *Ueber naive und sentimentale Dichtung*, On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry; and *Ueber die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet*, On the Stage considered as a Moral Institution. Reference is, moreover, to be made to Kant's *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, Critique of the Judgment, as the chief source from which Schiller derived his view of the beautiful and lofty.

of the lofty, the brilliant. The mere æsthetist has just as great delight in Correggio's heathen-mythological, as in his Christian pictures. He never inquires about the what, but only about the how. He takes as much interest in poetic delineations of immoral, criminal characters (Don Juan, Lady Macbeth, Richard III.), as in moral and noble characters; nay, not seldom he may even have greater interest in the immoral and profligate, so far as these enchain the fancy more, than in the moral, who sometimes may be somewhat colourless and monotonous. Moral contemplation, again, everywhere seeks for the relation to the moral law, and to the ideal of morality. But now it follows from this difference, that very frequently the æsthetic and the ethical come into collision with each other in life. According to the prescriptions furnished us by the æsthetic education, we are to cultivate our sense for the beautiful, the harmonious, in order to bring about agreement between duty and inclination, and to facilitate the exercise of duty. But if there are undeniably cases where for the æsthetically cultured the exercise of duty will be easier than for the æsthetically uncultured, still there are also cases where the contrary occurs. We will not here enter particularly into the collisions which inclination for a beautiful woman may evoke between the æsthetic and the ethical, of which Goethe's *Werther* may serve as example, to whose morality it did no good that his æsthetic sense was so developed and fine, which likewise also applies to Tasso in his relation to the princess. We will take another example. Let us suppose a female, with developed sense of beauty, whose duty it is in remote silence, unobserved and unregarded, to nurse a sick man having a loathsome disease; that she must remain day and night at the side of this sick one, and afford him every service which such sick-nursing involves; that during this exercise of duty she must renounce not only every enjoyment of art, which many a time gave her joy, but also the refreshing and enlivening enjoyment of nature, for which indeed she often longs, but from which she is excluded, because the sick man to whom she is chained by feelings of piety needs her every moment: will not her sense of beauty, her finer organization, become a tempting hindrance to her, an enemy of her exercise of duty, such as

has no existence at all to another who is not æsthetically developed, nay, is poorly equipped by nature, in an æsthetic point of view? True, some one may here object that we are not only to develop the feeling for the beautiful, but also the feeling for the lofty, which transports us above the world of sense, and makes us conscious that we are spiritual beings, who in the midst of the misery of this life feel themselves raised above all misery. We will leave it undecided whether the Stoic ideals of sublimity, to which Schiller points, would be effective enough to overcome, in the case mentioned, the hindrances opposing the sense of beauty. But in general, we will remark that in many cases the sense for the sublime may also bring with it great hindrances. For that which in the æsthetically sublime fetters the mind is the *power* which is therein revealed, without any inquiry as to the moral nature of the power; for only lack of power is æsthetically objectionable. The sublime characters that poetry and history represent to us, are distinguished by a spiritual power, which spreads a *shining* light over them, surrounds them with a nimbus. But this their sublime spiritual energy is very various; and the great characters that appear before us in history and tragedy, have mostly an ingredient of sin and guilt. Now, in this lies the temptation to approve, even in a moral point of view, what we æsthetically admire, although so much is present that one must morally condemn,—yea, the temptation to frame a morality for oneself after these æsthetic types. And there have been many who, in admiration for the æsthetically sublime and great, allowed themselves to be led into antinomianism, into a false geniality in morals, who, with contempt of the low, the small, the Philistine, as they called it, set duties aside which the actual relations required, preferred to act, or at least to feel, sublimely and grandly, instead of simply being righteous and true to duty.

Now from all this it by no means follows that the æsthetic education should not have its value. This, however, does follow, that no small degree of moral development and ripeness is required beforehand in order to apply it usefully, and that in any case care must be taken that it do not get in advance of the moral education, but rather occupy the relation to this latter of a mere concomitant. Wherever there is a want of

right insight in order to be able to control the æsthetic, the latter will become, in more than one respect, dangerous and obstructive to morality, will easily give the one concerned the impulse to antinomianism, eudemonism, epicureanism, and quietism, to effeminacy, moral sloth, and self-indulgence, of which there are always only too many examples among poets, artists, dilettantists, æsthetic reviewers, and theatrical critics, theatre-goers and novel-readers of both sexes, in those rich people who again and again make Italian tours to see works of art, picture galleries, and the beauties of nature, people whose morality, instead of being supported by the æsthetic, goes to ruin under a thousand æsthetic temptations, and who, not to speak of much else, manifestly become unfit for actual life. Where, again, the power of judgment is ripened and developed, thoroughly to distinguish between the ethical and the æsthetic, and at the same time the moral will sufficiently strengthened, to assign to the æsthetic in the development of the personality the subordinate and auxiliary position belonging to it, the æsthetic self-education will admit of being usefully applied. For then there will occur a *mutual action* between the ethical and the æsthetic. The ethical will then rule the æsthetic and bear the sceptre. And the æsthetic, again, will in many cases manifest a reactive power, to strengthen and purify the ethical, to cultivate the finer moral tact. But as the æsthetic education thus in a high degree itself needs to be supported by that to which it was to serve as a support and furtherance, it will be understood that only a relative worth belongs to it, and that one cannot promise himself a very great deal from its alliance.

But there is still another indispensable condition, if the æsthetic education is to be usefully applied. It almost seems superfluous to mention it, namely, that he who is to apply it possess in his nature, that is, from the first, an æsthetic *disposition*. As we distinguish between natural and ethical self-acquired virtues, so we must, in reference to the æsthetic, make a similar distinction. But now there are not a few men who are only very imperfectly furnished with æsthetic disposition, men in a high degree respectable, and in many respects brave and able, who yet on every occasion must give new proof of their want of æsthetic sense, their left-handed



and formless ways, their indiscretion and want of tact, whereby the impression of their otherwise excellent properties is injured. If such people subject themselves to the æsthetic education, the consequence will infallibly be, that nothing but a new form of bondage to the law and to duty emerges; while they, in order to acquire fair forms and graces, must do themselves violence, use now the bridle, now the whip, in order to satisfy the æsthetic rule, and yet all without success. If, for example, the innate want of tact in many men be even overcome in certain cases, certain social requirements, by means of continued exercise and discipline, yet it will return, so soon as new cases occur. The æsthetic disposition is, as Schiller so often repeats, a gift of heaven; and if the æsthetic is to be helpful to us in reconciling duty and inclination, in performing hard duty *with ease*, the æsthetic education must also itself proceed *with ease*; respect and grace, as amid smiling jest or play, must be exercised and learned. But if the æsthetic education is thus conditioned by a favourable æsthetic nature, and further by a higher as well intellectual as moral development; one may quite allow its human importance, but must also so limit it as not to apply it to all men, but only to a narrower circle of the gifted and cultured. It is in a spiritual sense aristocratic. When Schiller, in regard to æsthetic education, reminds us of Christianity, which redeems man from the bondage of the law by substituting for it a free inclination, we again must recall to mind that Christianity is not possessed of this aristocratic pre-eminent character that is inseparable from Schiller's view, as well as from all philosophic righteousness. For Christianity does not direct itself to the æsthetically gifted and philosophically cultured, but begins by pronouncing those blessed who are poor in spirit, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness; and under this condition, this presupposition, it promises to *every man* to help him to peace and to a deep harmony of his being, that will free him in another way from the bondage of the law.

#### § 20.

But granted that the conditions for an æsthetic education exist, will it then be able actually to bring to pass a har-



monious morality, to which, however, there belongs not merely a partial harmony of duty and inclination, but above all, an undisturbed and indestructible *peace* in the inner man, a unity in the depth of the human being, as the keynote of that harmony into which each of the discords of human life must be resolved? Or, in other words, can æsthetic education bring that to pass which, according to the gospel, comes to pass only through regeneration by God's Spirit and the redemption of Jesus Christ? For at bottom this was the opinion, as it was also thought with all earnestness that the theatre, at least for those who were initiated into the higher humanity, could suitably supplant the Church, as was also actually the case with many.

We must here point out a fundamental error in the whole ethics of Schiller, namely, that the opposition which is to be reconciled is none other than the opposition between reason and sense. If it were so that we had only to contend with an undisciplined nature, with impulses only needing to be controlled and regulated, with rudeness and want of culture, then one might hope that a moral education, which accompanied and helped the æsthetic, would at length effect a reconciliation in the being of man. But so optimistic a view of human nature does not agree with experience; and as a poet, Schiller himself in many cases has gone beyond this view. We have not merely to fight with flesh and blood, but with an invisible enemy; for behind the undisciplined nature, behind the sensual impulses, there stands the egoistic will as the proper enemy that we must fight. We recall Kant's doctrine of the radical evil, which Schiller did not appropriate. Of this radical evil one must say, however, that it can be expelled by no æsthetic education and refinement of taste.

And, further, we must repeat a truth of which one cannot be often enough reminded, because it is constantly forgotten again, namely, that no mere *knowledge* is able to redeem us from the egoistic will. But the æsthetic contemplation, the fancy-view which presents everything to itself in individual forms, is also a sort of knowledge, although a more lively sort than that which rests on abstract conceptions. And even in this consists our great difficulty, that we find ourselves in an

original discord between knowledge and will, or, as we may also express it, in a discord between the law and our will. For a knowledge which makes an indefeasible *requirement* from the will of man, is just an expression for the law; and it does not cease to be law because it clothes itself in æsthetic forms, because it is not uttered as a command of duty, but presents itself as a realized ideal. For as soon as this perfection, be it in nature or in art, addresses if even only a silent requirement to our will, we must therein acknowledge the law. Even in the æsthetic contemplation we remain under the law, so far as we cannot receive it into our will. Now, it is not only the testimony of the apostle, but also that of experience, that the law cannot quicken (help to regeneration, to the new life), or, what comes to the same thing, that no mere knowledge, no doctrine, is able to redeem us from egoism; that for this a new life's fountain, a new life's principle, is required. True, knowledge is an essential condition for the purifying of our will, in presenting to us the ideal and likewise the contradiction in which we stand to it. It may also indeed partly work upon the will; but where *power* fails the will, knowledge cannot communicate it. And what holds true of knowledge in general, admits of application also to the æsthetic contemplation. This can give us a living view of the ideal, as well in the forms of the beautiful as of the sublime; it can awaken a longing for it; it can evoke feelings and moods in which the spirit soars higher; it can bewitch and transport us into a dream-state, in which our egoism is *put to sleep*. But to give to egoism its death-wound, to transform the will in its centre, this art can do quite as little as philosophy. In his treatise on *The Stage as a Moral Institution*, from which Schiller promises himself so much, he himself makes an admission on this side, when he says: "Molière's Harpagon has perhaps reformed no usurer *yet*, the suicide Beverley has withdrawn *as yet* few of his brothers from the abominable passion for gambling, Karl Moor's unhappy robber-history will not perhaps make the highways much more secure." "But," he continues, "although we limit that great effect of the stage, were we so unjust as even to remove (that is, deny) it, how infinitely much of its influence still remains! If it neither destroys nor lessens the sum of vices, *has it not made*

*us acquainted with them?"* So the matter stands. This is what the theatre effects. It can show us the world and men in an ideal mirror, and can also tend to internally liberate our mind by transporting us into a contemplative state, and with this likewise communicating a humour which brings our mental powers into a new and freer circulation. Art may have the effect of confirming in us certain feelings and views. In the deepest foundation of our will, however, no sort of change has yet occurred.

We here again refer to Kant, who on this point forms a contrast to Schiller. When Kant treats of the radical evil in human nature, he makes the remarkable statement, that if a good will is to appear in us, this cannot happen through a *partial* improvement, not through any reform, but only through a *revolution*, a total overturn within us, that is to be compared to a new creation. When Kant uttered these words, he stood immediately before the door of Christianity, without however entering, or yet making any further application of this acknowledgment. The revolution he here requires is the regeneration of which Christ spoke with Nicodemus, when the latter came by night to Him, and received from the Lord the very instruction that with partial reforms nothing is gained. Kant now quieted himself, indeed, by stating the *requirement*: Man must undertake this revolution himself by thoroughly reversing the previous relation between his maxims, and by receiving, through an unchangeable decision, the principle of morality into his mode of thought, and reforming in detail accordingly, whereby one—since God looks upon the heart—must be able to become well-pleasing to Him. And yet in this only a lamentable inconsistency can be recognised. It is really of no use to set forth this requirement, if one cannot show the possibility of its fulfilment, and when one has shortly before admitted that we ourselves are not in a position to effect this revolution, because the radical evil has destroyed our maxims, and thus we, by our own means, cannot become pure in heart. We will only then be able to fulfil the requirement when we can occupy a standpoint fully independent of the radical evil *outside* our own natural *ego*. ("Give me a standpoint outside the earth," said Archimedes, "and I will move the earth.") The true consequence

of Kant's doctrine is *grace*, and this prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."<sup>1</sup> Otherwise we stop short at partial reforms, beyond which neither moral discipline nor æsthetic education can go.

### § 21.

The fundamental error in Schiller's ethics is the assumption that an autonomous (independent) freedom, a freedom without divine authority and without divine grace, can really attain to right unity with itself. Only in God does man come to harmony and to peace, and the autonomous freedom is condemned to the dualism between ideal and reality, to a schism with itself and the world. This appears unmistakably in Schiller himself. He is penetrated by a deep ethical enthusiasm, and may very properly be designated the poet of freedom and emancipation. In his earliest youth the ideal of freedom occurred to him in the form of a robber, who over against a morally corrupt society stands relatively justified. His Marquis Posa proclaimed from every stage, with glowing captivating eloquence, emancipation from despotism, from monarchical absolutism, from the rule of priests, from catholicism and inquisition, announced the freedom of the peoples, in connection with the ideals of citizenship of the world, of free thought, of the rights of man and the common weal. In his riper works he depicted, from different points of view, the ideal of freedom, as well as the temptations and collisions of freedom (*Wallenstein*); attempted even in the *Maid of Orleans* to raise himself to the representation of the faith that removes mountains. The suffering freedom that, with elevation and resignation, endures fate and guilt, he depicted in *Mary Stuart* and in the *Bride of Messina*; and he closed his career with *William Tell*, a popular hero, who gives the impulse to the heroic self-help of a whole people, to its self-emancipation from tyranny and bondage. In all these works we acknowledge and admire, more and more in proportion to his further self-development, the harmonious union of the ethical and the æsthetic, of dignity and grace, of elevation and beauty. And when we turn from the poet to the man, we

<sup>1</sup> Compare Frank, *System der christlichen Gewissheit*, I. 120 ff.

find in his noble, spiritually eminent personality, features of the same harmony, and say with Goethe :

“For, him behind, in unsubstantial show,  
The Common lay, *that binds us all below.*”

But if we inquire after the chief thing, whether in his heart he found peace and reconciliation, we receive no satisfying answer. He has felt the solemnity of the law, has bowed with veiled face beneath the majesty thereof, has in his inmost heart become convinced that all human virtue and greatness pales before the requirements of the law, that here there exists a divergence that no one can fill up, a yawning deep over which no one can throw a bridge, and in which no anchor can find bottom. If we further ask him what we shall lay hold of, we indeed hear him say :

“Admit the Deity into your will,  
And from His throne of worlds He'll come.”

But *how* we are to obey this requirement, namely, to admit the Deity into our will, who, as Schiller sings, dwells above the stars (above the stars He must dwell), that he has not told us, and could not even tell himself. He has no other gospel beyond art; and this he confides to us as his last :

“Thou needs must flee from life's oppressing throng,  
Away into the heart's still, holy room.  
*Freedom is but in dreams, and but in song*  
*For thee the Beautiful doth bud and bloom.*”

And if we seek to penetrate deeper into his self-confessions, we hear him as a pilgrim, a wanderer on earth, complain that he set out into life with a quiet hope and an obscure word of faith, to find an outlet from this labyrinth; but the longer and farther he had wandered, the more had he experienced that heaven and earth would not unite; that as often as he approached the goal, it drew farther away from him into the distance. Then we hear him lament that the ideals that were his companions when he entered the way of life, faithlessly left him the farther he advanced on that way, and that the suns which at first gave him light went out one after the other. And if he has to say what then is left, what he has retained, he names only *friendship*, and quiet, indefatigable *work* (“occupation, that never wearies”). Now friendship



and industry are undoubtedly noble blessings; but if the whole outcome of life is to be limited to these, we must pronounce this a miserable result. Here also, as with Goethe, the last thing is *resignation*. And here also, just as in the ancient heathenism, resignation is the opposite pole to optimism, in this case the opposite pole to Schiller's optimist view of human freedom, of human nature's power of self-help and self-redemption.

Yet we will not forget, that when he as a poet deeply felt that the best must come to us as a higher gift, which we cannot gain by the force of our exertions, he has herewith given utterance to deep presentiments of the gospel, as when he, in his poem *Fortune (das Glück)*, thus beautifully expresses it:

"From what is unworthy the will that is earnest can keep thee  
All that is highest comes freely down from the gods;"

or when he, in the same poem, says: No one becomes happy (blessed) but through a *miracle*. For in these and kindred utterances he speaks in manifest contradiction with the principles of self-help and self-redemption, and declares that the morality which is only our very own, even granting it to preserve us from what is bad and unworthy, yet can never advance us to the perfect, that the highest must be given us from above, without any desert and worthiness of ours, and that we have only to accept the same in humility and unbounded thankfulness. Such presentiments, however, by which he raises himself above his ethical (Kantian) principles, only testify that he has not found inner harmony and peace, but that he still seeks these blessings.

In Thorvaldsen's statue of Schiller, the poet is represented with bent head. Many have blamed this, and thought that the poet ought to have been represented with raised head, elevated to heaven, as an expression of his enthusiasm for the ideal of freedom. Others, again, are of the opinion that Thorvaldsen here also has hit the right mark: that Schiller must be given with bent head, with the bearing of dejected thinking and brooding over the contrast between ideal and reality, over the unsolved riddle of life. Among the defenders of this view we name Francis Baader, who has remarked that there belongs to the characteristics of Schiller's poetry the



sadness of unsatisfied search, which like a tear dims the clear glance, but in this very gloom is refracted in rich colours, and appears like a rainbow in the cloud sinking to the earth; that thus the master has accurately expressed the character of the poet by the head bent towards the earth.<sup>1</sup>

*The Middle-way Morality.*

§ 22.

The moral life under the law, in its previously considered form, incessantly emphasizes the ideal, but ends with painful resignation, because the ideal is not to be realized. In opposition to this there is another direction of the moral life which before all lays emphasis on *reality* and the practically attainable; on this, that one must take the world just as it is, a direction which, without troubling itself about it, from the outset renounces the ideal, which costs it no trouble, as it does not know the ideal at all, and so also does not miss it. This realistic direction of thought and life holds to the so-called morality of the middle-way, or the middle-sort morality, which is also well designated the morality of practical world-culture, and that is alone of worth for life. One simply does not permit himself ideal flights of mind, does not sink into broodings on the unconditioned command of duty. Instead, one holds to the special duties that daily life brings with it, and makes it his chief problem to preserve the "golden middle-way" between the extremes, and neither in any respect to go too far nor to remain too far behind. Having regard to the considerations imposed by actual life, and avoiding every lack or superfluity, one moves on and on exclusively in the finite and conditioned, without ever entering on a real relation to the unconditioned, the absolutely precious, whereby thus the deeper contradiction existing within man does not at all reach the consciousness, however readily it be allowed that we are all imperfect men. This morality we add to the rubric of philosophical righteousness, so far as it also rests upon a

<sup>1</sup> Baader's *Werke*, V. 349 f. : "Ueber die von Thorwaldsen ausgeführte Statue Schiller's."

process of reasoning, and is not limited to single parts of moral conduct, but extends to the whole life. Its consistent followers pass through an entire long earthly existence without ever raising their glance to the ideal. If this latter once presents itself to them with its glance of eternity, with its *unconditioned* and *inviolable* requirement, they do not stand their ground, but at once take refuge again in finitude, in the merely relatively valuable, in the conditioned relations.

Yet, if we would more closely estimate the middle-way morality, and not only recognise its manifest defects, but also the relative validity, the worth that belongs to it, and which makes it *indispensable to every one*, and that it must occupy its position within every morality, but no doubt *subordinated to a higher*; we must now more thoroughly test a definition usually named after Aristotle, namely, that definition by which virtue is said to be the right mean between two extremes.

### § 23.

The right mean is equivalent to the right measure. But measure is a definition of quantity, a relation between magnitudes; and the virtuous mode of dealing is, according to this, defined as that which ever holds the mean between over-measure and under-measure, between too much and too little, between exaggerations and shortcomings, excesses and defects. Thus charitableness (liberality) is the right mean between prodigality and avarice; bravery the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice. The weak side of this definition is, that it only determines the difference between virtue and vice *quantitatively*, that is, only as a difference of degree, resting on a more or less, and so on a moving boundary, while this difference must be defined *qualitatively*, that is to say, as a difference of essence, as an absolute thoroughgoing difference of principles; that one learns nothing of the proper *nature* of the right mean and the right measure, nothing of what in this measure constitutes the *thing* and the *essence* itself, just as little as of the essence of vices and virtues, or of the extremes; that it says nothing of the moral *sentiment*, from which virtuous or vicious actions spring, as from their source, nothing of the motive or the quietive, nothing of the position

of the conscience and the will to the unconditioned command of duty; in short, nothing of all that morals chiefly inquire into. It gives us nothing further than the determination of a *relation*, which is thus so far a mere determination of *form*. Now, as regards Aristotle, it is indeed right to bear in mind that the definition quoted only characterizes the one side of his ethics, namely, the side turned towards actual life, the strictly speaking practical side, and that his ethics have also an ideal side, on which the unconditioned finds its full recognition.<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that the actions falling under that mean (*ἡ μεσότης*), according to Aristotle, first receive their moral value when they have their foundation in the self-conscious knowledge of the commandment of the reason, and are undertaken for the sake of the good in itself; that virtue does not consist in the external action alone, but in the sentiment animating it, which must be free from all egoistic motives. Yet the question may again be asked: whether in Aristotle this ideal side really receives practical application, and whether, in practice at least, all does not issue in the morals of externalism and of works.<sup>2</sup> We will not, however, here enter upon historical investigations on Aristotle and his many followers, through the entire Middle Ages and down to modern times. We wish to consider the conception in question, of intermediate morality in itself; for as an independent conception, it has ever itself played a great part in human life, and does so down to the present day.

Although the conception of virtue as the mean between two extremes is inadequate to express the essence of virtue and of vice, it finds, on the other hand, a rich application when we speak of the *phenomena* (appearance-forms) of virtue and of vice. It is of great importance, not indeed for the essential and internal, which is the proper morality, but at any rate for the phenomenal (emerging in the world of appearance) or æsthetic morality, which no doubt must take its origin from the essential morality; and thus must not seek to be independent of it. That virtue is the mean between two extremes, contains the truth that the virtuous or the wise man must even in his outward appearing produce the impression of the harmonious,

<sup>1</sup> Brandis, *das aristotelische Lehrgebäude*, p. 143 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Luthardt, *drittes Programm über Aristoteles*, 1876, pp. 17 ff., 47.

of moderation and of order, of form and of self-limitation; whereas he that is given to a vice, or infected by a fault, will in his conduct make the impression of the disharmonious, of the unbeautiful, of one striving against form and the right rules of conduct. In this its external appearance, wherein both virtue and vice enter into the finite conditions of life and relations, into their relativeness, changeableness, and temporariness, the moral indisputably falls under quantitative determinations of a more or less, although these first receive their right moral significance through the deeper-lying qualitative, that is, essential determinations. Industry receives its true moral worth through a qualitative determination, namely, through the sentiment with which one works, through faithfulness in the service of duty; and in duty itself, viewed purely ideally, there is no more or less; it knows only the unconditioned: Thou oughtest, thou must! But, on the other hand, industry admits of being brought under quantitative determinations. For the degree in which I exert myself—how many hours a day, for example, I shall work, to what range I shall extend my activity—depends on my power of work, and must be decided according to circumstances. True, the important thing here is to hit the right mean, in order on the one hand not to become guilty of laxity and neglect, on the other hand not to weaken one's strength through over-exertion, or to fall a prey to a useless and fruitless over-activity. Every life's enjoyment receives its moral worth through the mental appreciation of the blessings of life and the thankful sentiment with which they are enjoyed, and has in this its qualitative determination. On the other hand, it must be quantitatively determined according to the special susceptibility of each one. Here it is important to hit the right mean, in order neither to fall into immoderateness, nor into pedantic abstinence. Economy receives its moral-qualitative determination through the consciousness of being the steward of entrusted goods, the consciousness of responsibility, and of an account to be rendered, through faithfulness in stewardship. On the other hand, it must be determined quantitatively. For it depends upon my income how much I dare spend, whether for my requirements or for my pleasures, so as to preserve the right mean between greed and prodigality. The difference

between greed and prodigality may, quantitatively considered, consist in a given case in a few dollars more or less. But qualitatively, in principle, in essence, the difference by no means consists in a more or less. Here prodigality and economy are related like faithfulness and unfaithfulness, which is no difference of degree, as if unfaithfulness were only a less degree of faithfulness; for, on the contrary, faithfulness and unfaithfulness are related to each other as absolute opposites mutually exclusive. The conception of virtue as the right mean finds, however, its application not only to human actions, but also to human affections—for instance, joy and sorrow. A fool easily yields to an excess of joy and sorrow, while even in this the wise man will know how to preserve moderation. But the moral value of joy and sadness rests on deeper-seated qualitative determinations of the sentiment. The moral value that belongs, for instance, to the moderation of the wise man in his sorrow is different, according as the principle or source of his moderation is mere resignation, or faith.

The moderate morality, however, extends over the whole moral world, in so far as the judging of it falls under quantitative determinations (of more or less). In daily life each one feels himself directly required to apply it in intercourse with men, in walk and conversation, amid all business, and especially also in social life. How often, for example, one has to visit this or that acquaintance or patron, so as on the one hand not to neglect them, on the other hand not to become wearisome to them by too frequent visits; or in what degree one has to take part in social conversation, so as neither to sit dumb and as if absent, or as one who in silence criticises the whole, nor yet to usurp the conversation, and fall into a lecturing tone; the decision thereon belongs entirely to the point of view of the "right mean." But all this receives moral significance in the proper sense only when the outer side is brought into connection with the inner, and thereby with the whole life of the personality. Sundered from this, it has only æsthetic significance, that is, it shows merely the surface of virtues and faults, their form-side, their phenomenon. Thus, to add an example to those already adduced in Holberg's *Wochenstube* (Chamber of Confinement), an advice is given to women to preserve the right mean in their



conversation when they make visits on such occasions. We are to guard, on the one hand, against the extreme represented by the schoolmaster David's Else, and the other gossips who deafen the lying-in woman with their chatter, fall out about their snuff, about town rumours, and about the ship just seen in the moon, so that the lying-in woman has to hold her ears for their noise. On the other hand, we are, however, to guard against the other extreme appearing in Engelke the hatter's wife, entering immediately after them, of whom shortly before it had been told that she sits in company like a statue, that has neither voice nor speech; who makes her bow, takes her seat, but in her embarrassment utters not a single word, rises, makes her salutation, and departs. An example that admits of being translated into an infinitude of different forms, while the moral remains the same, namely, that we must also in intercourse observe a *juste milieu*, which in many cases amounts to this, that we are to be as most people are, that is, a lesson without any deeper determination of the essence. In high society also the right mean plays a chief part; for here also the main rule is, to do neither too much nor too little; in all that happens to preserve decency, moderation, equipoise, in all relations a firm demeanour; also, never to go too far in one's utterances and judgments, not to let oneself be carried away, for example, not to express too great admiration, but also to blame nothing too keenly, as the tone of high society requires a certain indifference to hover over all.

Men who order their whole life according to this moderate morality, sundered from the *unconditioned*, will never arrive at any other self-knowledge than such as is confined to the knowledge of the externally decent and respectable, of what simply belongs to their merely phenomenal life (spent in the world of appearance) with an outward aim. To arrive at a real self-knowledge, the unconditioned command of duty, or the requirement of the ideal, must dawn upon them as the one thing that, with all that is singular and special, is to be that which determines and animates from within outwards. So long as such people hold to the mere moderate morality, and to the *neutral* mean (different from the central mean of principle), they are only in the outmost periphery of morality. Yet it must be allowed that in many cases the want of the



acknowledged ideal can in some measure be supplied by an immediate *tact*, in which the ideal is instinctively operative. Still, however excellent a thing *tact* may be, and however much can in no other way be decided than by a right *tact*, this is yet an insufficient substitute, where moral principles and a moral view of life are required.

#### § 24.

While the moderate morality moves exclusively within finite things, it nevertheless develops in its prose an ideal element, so far, namely, as it plays a chief part in the comic conception of human faults and virtues. True, such a middle sort of morality may, even through its ideal deficiency, appear in a comic light. It also, however, sharpens the sight for the comical existing outside itself, for the extreme, for immoderateness, for caricature, whose significance just consists in being an exaggeration of the personally peculiar and special, of the characteristic (even as the Italian word *caricare* properly means to overload). True, indeed, the comic embraces, besides the extreme, other things and more. But the extreme remains the chief element of the comic, as the passing beyond moderation, although in an entirely different way, also forms a chief element of the tragic. The morality that may be deduced from many works of comic poetry is just the moderate morality. The moralist who will lead men back to the right mean, and, warning, points to the extremes to be avoided, says: "Be moderate! Not too much, and not too little! Else thou behavest like a senseless man, and becomest *bad*." The comedian, again, says, while showing us in his hollow mirror the same extremes: "Be moderate! Not too much and not too little! Else thou becomest *ridiculous*." Let us here refer to Theophrastus, the Greek philosopher (about the year 312 before Christ), and to the Danish comic poet and moralist, Ludwig Holberg (1684–1754), in whom we may learn the middle sort of morality, both in its advantages and its defects.

#### § 25.

Theophrastus, who in modern times has been followed by the Frenchman J. de la Bruyère (born 1644), has depicted in

his *Characters* vices and faults, in order, more effectually than through mere development of conception, to instruct and to improve. As a disciple of Aristotle, he applies his master's doctrine in the said point, so far as he taught men to regard human failures and faults as extremes. Yet it is not a representation of actual characters he gives us, but rather a collection of features of character, in which a single vice or fault is individualized—a sort of silhouettes. The following features may serve as examples.<sup>1</sup> He thus depicts the flatterer (ὁ κόλαξ): “When he meets thee, he says, ‘Dost thou not see how the whole world has fastened its eyes on thee? In the whole city thou art the only one forming the object of such attention. Yesterday the Portico was still resounding with thy praise. The talk was as to who may be the best citizen, and among more than thirty persons that were present, none was found who did not begin and end with thee.’” In such features, Theophrastus proceeds to depict the flatterer; and we infallibly receive the impression that this man goes into the extreme, that here there appears an excessive courtesy and politeness. “Wilt thou relate anything, he at once bids all present be silent, and whispers to them laudations upon thee, but so that thou thyself canst hear them. As soon as thou ceasest to speak, he breaks out before all the others into superabundant words of admiration. Does a jest fall from thy lips which is not just witty, he laughs with all his might, and holds his handkerchief before his mouth to quench his laughter. He buys apples and pears to bring to thy children. He divides them in thy presence, kisses, caresses the children, saying at the same time, Dear shoots of an eminent father! Wilt thou pay a visit to a friend, he runs before to announce thee, and then comes back and says, I have announced that thou art coming, and so on.”

“The talker (ὁ ἀδολέσχης). This is a man who has not the slightest scruple to address any one whom he does not know at all, to sit down beside him, to force on a conversation with him by uttering a eulogy on his own wife. Thereupon he relates to this stranger what he dreamed last night, and immediately afterwards he relates in all detail what he

<sup>1</sup> After the text of Ussing's edition of *Theophrasti characteres et Philodemi de vitiis liber decimus*.

yesterday ate for supper. When once the conversation is in progress, he raises his voice to declaim against the present race, and insists that things are worse in the world now than ever before. Then he passes on to speak of the price of corn, that the times are bad, and that a rain in these days would greatly benefit the ensuing harvest. Suddenly he asks what we are writing to-day, and launches out fully upon what every one knows, at what times of the year the religious festivals are celebrated, and so on."

"The distrustful (*ὁ ἄπιστος*). Whenever he sends one of his slaves to market to buy provisions, he sends another slave behind him to inquire how much he has expended for the goods. It happens often when he has gone to bed that he asks his wife whether she has closed his press well, whether the court door is well secured; and although she assures him that all is in good order, he leaves his bed, lights a lamp, goes barefoot and without outer clothes through the whole house, to convince himself thereof with his own eyes, and during the whole night he does not fall asleep, and so on."

"The miser (*ὁ αἰσχροκέρδης*). If he gives a dinner, he does not serve up as much food as is necessary. He borrows from the guest who lodges with him; and when he divides the portions at table, he first lays aside the double for himself, saying, that he who bears the cost must also have a larger share than all the rest. When sent out along with other citizens on a public commission, he leaves the provisions for the journey to his family, and lives at the expense of his fellow-travellers. He overloads the slave that accompanies him with baggage, and refuses him sufficient food. If his children have through sickness left school for a month, he is certain to deduct as much from the school fees. If one of his friends is to have a wedding, or is about to have his daughter married, he speedily undertakes a journey to spare the bridal gift (the marriage present). He lends nothing except entirely worthless things, and so on."

In this manner are the so-called characters of Theophrastus maintained. No one will read them without pleasure, although Holberg has said that he found them under his expectation, and that Theophrastus is far excelled by Molière. We may add that he is also far excelled by Holberg. In any case,

his pictures of character illustrate what is meant by keeping to the surface of the ethical. If we inquire, that is, after the proper instruction which we can derive from such representations, it remains but superficial. We see, indeed, that all those people have fallen into extremes that give the impression of the ridiculous, or at least border upon it; but *why* these extremes are irreconcilable with a truly moral character, we are not shown. We have here merely æsthetic morality, a morality of the phenomenal (of the demeanour that meets the eye), but absolutely no essential and proper morality. Such an æsthetic morality may indeed have an effect on "the manners," understanding by a man's manners what is predominant and customary in the external manner of life and action, but no effect on morality as such, which embraces the innermost in man: the feeling of duty and pure sentiment.

#### § 26.

Far more perfect than in Theophrastus are at any rate the comic representations of human follies, vices, and faults in the great comic poets. And here we would especially name Holberg, and that because Holberg himself set before him the problem to moralize by means of his comedies and other works of genius, and was of the opinion that no more effective means of moralizing has been invented than comedies. Holberg also wished, exactly as we saw before of Schiller, to work for the moral education of his people, and regarded the stage as a moral institution, although he was far from the high-flying ideal conceptions which Schiller united with that institution, for this reason, if for no other, that he lacked the organ for the sublime, which mainly served him only as an object of travesty—this being one ground of those antipathetic judgments that Schiller pronounced on him. However, he meant the same thing as Schiller, so far as he also wished to work for the moral by means of the æsthetic. He questions whether the doctrines of the best and most thorough philosophers have had greater effect, and have more successfully opposed human follies, than Molière's comedies, and therefore reckons Molière also among the greatest philosophers that have ever lived, and have deserved well of the human race.

He refers to another author who has doubted whether the most forcible sermon can ever have better converted a hypocrite than Molière's *Tartuffe*. If we now revert to Holberg's own comedies, it is not to say anything about their æsthetic value, which might be superfluous, but to examine the moral gain they may afford. And here we must maintain that the morality of Holberg's comedies is to be viewed essentially under the same view-point as the *Characters* of Theophrastus. Holberg, in depicting human failings, especially the follies and faults of his own age, lets us recognise their appearance in human characters and actions throughout as extremes, as degenerations now on the side of an excess, and now of a defect. In representing these extremes as laughable, he aims at once at entertainment and at ameliorative instruction. The entertainment we see at once; but as regards the instruction, it takes place indeed, nay, it strikes spectators and readers, but is yet subjected to a great limitation. For Holberg ever teaches us that we have to guard against the faults made ridiculous; but if we inquire after virtue itself, after the ideal which we have to aim at, one can derive, as little from his comedies as from his other works, any other morality than the moderate morality, which is also sometimes expressly put in the mouth of one of the persons. So, for example, in the piece *The Masquerade*, a comedy in which one may think on the pietistic dispute then waged on the lawfulness of the so-called middle things. Here one of the fathers (Leonhard) says, "Let us go the middle-way. I do not condemn the masquerade, but do its abuse; for to go to the masked ball thrice a week is to lose one's means, is to lose one's health, is to steal three days of the week, nay, at times the whole week; by a life of revel and riot young people may become quite unfit for work." Or at the close of the *Busy Man*:

"Full often it by no means serves  
If one is all too witty.  
So hot toil many a man unnerves,  
And he's lost—more's the pity."

Or at the close of *Without Head and Tail*:

"The golden middle-way alone  
Leads surely to the station;  
Yet nature to extreme drives one,  
And out of moderation."



Still, far more emphatically than by such sentences the poet teaches by means of the *vis comica* in the representation of the extremes themselves.

It has often been urged as a special advantage of Holberg's comedies, and that in a moral point of view, that he so earnestly contends against a fault even then predominant, namely, wishing to *seem* without *being*, pursuing appearance, hunting mere shadows as if they were realities, be it social and political shadows (*The seeker of rank*, *The would-be politician*), or military (*Jacob v. Tyboe*, *the boastful soldier*) or learned shadows (*Erasmus Montanus*, who comes home from the university with his *Philosophia instrumentalis*), or shadows of outlandishness, without root in the natural peculiarity (*Jean de France*), and more besides, belonging to the hollow, shadowy domain of vanity. In opposition to all affectation, to all pomposity and strutting with borrowed feathers, he has insisted on the requirement of truth and naturalness, and with sure tact, with the immediately effective, fanciful power of humour, has given life to this requirement in the consciousness of the nation. Now one would think indeed that when appearance and shadow are combated, we must above all be directed to the essence, and the ideal must somehow come to light in the comedies of our poet. But this is not the case. For if we inquire, "What is truth? what is nature?" to which in the world of moral freedom above all *the normal* belongs, for which precisely morality asks, and which is the true existence, agreeing with the proper destiny of man; nothing at all is brought before our eyes but the comic masks themselves that reflect actual life, always indeed in exaggerated pictures, but yet with striking truth. For our moral meditation, nothing farther will be found than the following: The true and the natural, that is, the normal, is only present when all such untruth as here appears in the light of ridicule is excluded. But it is left to ourselves to discover wherein consists that which lies midway between the degenerations, the extremest ends, or what is the genuine reality.

The morality to be found in Holberg one must therefore reduce to this, that he has ploughed through the field and drawn furrows, has prepared the way for something higher



which he himself, however, was not in a position to give. By this we no doubt place his comedies lower than he himself would have them placed. But if in Holberg's time there were many who too much undervalued his comedies, nay, even regarded them as injurious, he himself overvalued, not his comedies in general, but his morality, of the merely relative and limited value of which he was unconscious. No one will call in question that by his comedies and other elegant works he exercised a purifying influence on the manners of his age, exercised a preparatory (propædeutic) discipline in the outer court of morality, wielded, as it were, a severe besom over society, by which much impropriety, as well in the way of life and intercourse of men, as also in social institutions, was swept away, or at least corrected. As little can it be disputed that his influence on manners was at the same time a certain influence on the mode of thought, in so far as he enlivened in men's minds the already mentioned, although only undefined, requirement of truth and naturalness. But a moral view of life, in the ideal meaning of the word, he has not uttered, at least has given it no comprehensible form. For he himself boasts of it indeed as an effect of his comedies, "that our Danish theatre has recast the citizen class of these kingdoms as into another form, and has taught them to reason about virtues and faults, of which many had hitherto only had a vague idea" (*Epist.* p. 179); but the question is just this, After what categories and points of view has he taught them to reason?

The want of the ethical, and wholly of the religious ideals, shows itself in all his writings. That sparks of them appear in one place and another of his very numerous works, as also in his life, we will certainly not deny. In his comedy *Jeppe vom Berge*, which depicts the wretched, degraded, and demoralized state of the Danish peasant under the then bad rule of the landlords, but likewise also shows how the same peasant, after he has been by a strange change transposed into the position of his landlord, immediately rebounds into the opposite extreme, and becomes an insufferable tyrant, abusing those beneath him—in this Jeppe and his strange change, to which belongs his supposed awaking in Paradise and amidst its harmonious sounds, several (for instance, Steffens and

Sibbern) have found deeply touching elements, something by which our sorrow over human misery is awakened. And Holberg's personal life permits us to recognise the working of higher ideal powers in his mind, for instance, his love of music, no less also his frequent sad moods, in which he was oppressed with a feeling of the vanity of human life.<sup>1</sup> But nowhere in his works does it come to a real victorious breaking through of the ideal. If he engages in his *Moral Thoughts* or in the *Epistles* in the discussion of moral problems, or gives a moralizing representation of the materials of the history of the world, the state, or even the Church,—for everywhere he appears as moralist, as he declares it to be his chief task “to revive the neglected study of morals in these northern kingdoms,”—we never get beyond a prosaic intermediate morality. “All virtue,” he himself says, “consists in mediocrity (moderation), and as soon as it passes the boundary of it, it is metamorphosed (changed) into a vice. The great Chinese philosopher Confucius has composed a moral and political system, which he named *Medium magnum*, or *the great middle-way*, by which he would make known that the middle-way is the foundation of all good things, and the chief rule that man has to observe. The best may tend to destruction if not exercised with moderation. I have known certain persons who were destroyed through their diligence, and others who by their saving and hoarding became poor. Activity is a great virtue, and has excellent effects. It is like a noble horse that must be held in with bit and bridle. Nay, it is like the wind that can move the ship onwards, but can also wreck it. Reason must therefore be the steersman, and see that the wind is employed, but only for help.” Here we, on our side, must point out that if it were really so, that all virtue consists in mediocrity, which as soon as it passes its limits is metamorphosed into a vice, that thus sin and vice is nothing else than an extreme,—a too-much or too-

<sup>1</sup> When the organist Scheibe, in Trinity Church, Copenhagen, arranged some rehearsals of the funeral music for the burial of Christian VI., Holberg was present each time, and stood among the other hearers in the chancel; and when a particularly mournful passage was given by a numerous choir, on each of these rehearsals he burst again into tears; each time, when the passage occurred, he withdrew, handkerchief in hand, behind the altar.—N. M. Petersen, *Danish Literary History* (in Danish), IV. 736.

little,—then the difference between good and evil would only be a difference of degree, an easy passage from the one to the other. But that is not how the case stands. The difference between good and evil is a difference of essence, a difference between two opposite principles, which mutually exclude each other, and are in mortal conflict. Badness and wickedness is not a goodness driven too far, or a merely defective goodness. Envy and malice are not an excessive justice, hypocrisy not an excessive religiousness or morality. Theft, murder, adultery, are, as Aristotle himself allows, injustice in themselves, and can by no means be derived from virtues that are merely driven too far, or perhaps not far enough. In ordinary life it is usual to say that truth lies in the middle, which may also often be correct in the outer world. Thus faith often occupies its position midway between superstition and unbelief. But with the declaration that one must neither believe too much nor too little, one would certainly give but a poor guide to faith. What the mediocre or intermediate morality lacks are just the deeper essential definitions; and where it enters upon higher things, it will not escape the fate of falling into the commonplace.

If, then, one can still read Holberg's *Moral Thoughts*, despite their want of all depth, for entertainment and instruction, it is because of a quality common to them with his comedies, namely, the *vis comica* (the tone that involuntarily provokes to laughter or smiles), the salt that is intermingled, and removes from the otherwise poor observations their insipid taste. Here also he often applies with incomparable humour—for humour is with him the essentially ideal, his intellectual burning-glass—the requirement of naturalness and truth, insisting that we must distinguish between the mere appearance and reality (seeming and being) of the virtues as well as vices, although he at any rate gives us a much better account of the appearance, the external manifestation of both, than of their reality, their inner nature. But he has also often opposed and ridiculed something in his amusing writings as a shadow, which was no shadow at all, but a higher reality for which he only lacked an eye. And with his great influence on the nation—no Danish author has gained so general an influence as he, and no one stands

so firmly in the favour of the nation—he has led many of his admirers into the same path. He has greatly nursed and strengthened our natural national Danish inclination to that intermediate morality, as well as that inclination, pretty often occurring among us, to turn earnest into jest, and to dispose of weighty questions with a joke. He has—not only so far as it has a good sense, but also with disadvantageous effect—emphasized the lesson that it is most advisable to remain pretty near the earth, and to engage in no too high ideal flight, so as not to lose oneself in the clouds.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, we at the same time by no means forget that there is also an opposite tendency, represented by men like Kingo, Oehlen-schläger, and others, which belongs to the character of the Danish nationality as well, and that both tendencies in their very opposition may promote the national culture, if the opposition leads them mutually to limit and complement each other.

And herewith we close these our considerations on the intermediate morality and the defective ideal.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES.—THE  
WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW.

§ 27.

From the different manifestations of philosophic righteousness we now turn to the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes, with which we enter into an entirely different sphere, which is not to be viewed as a continuation or higher development of the preceding, but constitutes a contrast to it, even as Israel is not a higher development of heathenism, but forms a contrast to it, and must be understood from its own pre-suppositions. The righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes stands on the ground of revealed religion, where the law is acknowledged as the law of God, sin as disobedience to God. Herein consists the great advantage of Pharisaism. If it were sought to find the defect of it in this, that it limited righteousness to a single people, the descendants of Abraham, and that

<sup>1</sup> To this applies what Grundtvig has said regarding Holberg in his little *Chronicle of the World* (1812).

it bound the moral to such an extent to the religious that the former attained no self-dependence, not even a merely relative independence of the religious; it must be remarked, on the other hand, that this particularism was largely founded on the special position which the people of Israel, according to the counsel of Providence, was to occupy in the economy of revelation, although Pharisaism perverted this position to national pride. The peculiar fundamental fault of it we must recognise in the sense and spirit in which it, within the once divinely ordained limits, always conceived the relation to God and the righteousness with which it was herein occupied. And this it is that the Lord had in view when He said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 20).

If we would form a judgment on the old Pharisees, we must not direct our view merely to their hypocrisy, which the Lord so often rebukes. There were also honest Pharisees, who earnestly pursued the righteousness of the law; and we need here only name men like Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and the Apostle Paul, who testifies of himself that he was before his conversion "after the law a Pharisee, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless" (Phil. iii. 5, 6), and that therein he had "lived in all good conscience before God" (Acts xxiii. 1). Thus he tells us himself that this his Pharisaic righteousness had been no mere mask of righteousness. But its defect, as he afterwards owned, was its superficiality, its external work-system, its imperfect understanding of the proper spirit of the law, and along with this also the lack of the consciousness that the *disposition* of man, the human heart, needs a renovation, a thorough transformation. The more deeply he went into the requirements of the law, and the more he penetrated into its meaning, the more was he led towards "the better righteousness" which Christ teaches in the Sermon on the Mount; the more he became conscious of what he declares in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, that the law is *spiritual*, embraces the inmost part of man, that by the law there comes only the knowledge of sin, but the law cannot "give life" (Gal. iii. 21), cannot bestow the power for its fulfilment, can make no new



heart. And the law was to him a pedagogue to Christ (ver. 24). For "through the law he died to the law, that he might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19), in order to receive *of grace* what he could not give to himself, to gain Christ's righteousness, the righteousness of faith, which even Abraham and the truly pious in Israel had typically possessed by believing in the promises of grace, the meaning of which also now became plain to him.

The majority of the Pharisees, however, went the opposite way. They understood the promises in a purely carnal manner, and conceived the law merely as an external letter. The righteousness with which they busied themselves required at the same time too much; the observance of an intolerable amount of external commands and prescriptions; and again too little, for the chief thing in the law was left aside,—the spirit was lacking. We may briefly designate their standpoint in the words of the Lord, that "they tithed mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted *the weightier matters of the law*, (*τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου*), judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matt. xxiii. 23). With these words he designates the spirit of the law. By the word judgment (*κρίσις*) we must first understand the application of the law they ought to make to themselves (Luke xii. 57: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"), that *judgment* which they themselves in their own inward part should undertake between light and darkness, the interior self-examination that they should institute. In like manner they lacked *mercy*, which also belongs to the weightier matters of the law—love to the unhappy, the suffering, the poor. The observance of the minutest but easy statutes of the Sabbath law was more to them than helping a man in need (Luke xiv. 5). And when, lastly, the Saviour reckons *faith* among the weightier matters of the law, we must understand the first and chief commandment, love to God ("Give me thine heart!"), which has its root in faith, in the heart that opens to its God and yields itself to Him. Thus the Lord shows them that they deny the law in three respects: in the relation of man to himself (one's own soul), in relation to his neighbour, and lastly in relation to God.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican may serve as an illustration. The Pharisee, who thanked God that he was

not like other people, neglected judgment (the crisis), forgot to prove and judge himself, lived thus in respect to his own life in an uncritical state. He neglected mercy, in judging publicans and sinners unmercifully. He neglected faith; for however dogmatically correct his faith might be, yet there were wanting the right pious motives in his heart. His faith was nothing but an approbation of a certain sum or system of doctrines, an external bowing under the authority of the divine word, but not a sure confidence in the God of grace (he "believed rightly, but was not a right believer").

### § 28.

Amid all the changes which the history of the Christian world brings with it, there recurs at all times, even in the Church of Christ, the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes—that is, wherever an external ecclesiasticism takes the place of the true internal righteousness, and extends its superficiality over the whole moral life. The motives of this kind of virtue are fear of punishment and hope of a reward. Through obedience to the Church it is hoped to purchase heaven, to avert the punishment of hell. At one time the individual yields himself to a false security, in which one thinks and hopes the best of himself, notwithstanding that judgment as well as mercy and the faith of the heart are neglected; at another, such an one is possessed by a spirit of fear, fears to have offended God through some omission or transgression, and seeks to make it good through some external performance or some sacrifice. Catholicism is extremely rich in examples of this tendency. But Protestantism also knows this kind of righteousness, namely, when one sets his trust upon the ecclesiastical confession of faith, or upon a system of dogmas, instead of the living God and Saviour; when one depends upon the possession of the true doctrine of the order of salvation, instead of living in this order; when one sets the *means* of grace in the place of saving grace itself, and makes idols of pulpit, baptism, altar, confessional, with which there is great temptation to hypocrisy. Something of this leaven appears constantly among the Church party conflicts, where, with the legal service that is performed with the letter

of the Scripture and of the Confession, the three things, "judgment, mercy, and faith," are neglected. Whether a whole Church occupy the dangerous standpoint in giving itself up to the imagination of its "infallibility," or a single man take that position, peace and salvation will ever be to be gained only by descending from this standpoint, and occupying that of the publican in the gospel.

Over against modern humanism the ecclesiastical Pharisaism occupies a hostile and recklessly condemning position. On the other hand, it must be content with constant persecution from that tendency and party which has made it one of its chief tasks to free the world from its yoke, and to carry through its "*Cultur-kampf*" (culture-conflict) against all that is Pharisaic. It attacks Pharisaism for its particularism, its superficiality, its pride, and not seldom accuses it of hypocrisy; and all that not without a certain relative justification. But after the modern humanism has given to Pharisaism its lesson, it finds itself very often in the illusion that it has itself no need of the Church and Christianity, to which, as it maintains, such great aberrations adhere, and retires, self-satisfied, to its philosophic righteousness. But however great the difference may be between philosophic and Pharisaic righteousness, one thing is common to them both: *self-righteousness*. Let us but place one of the old Stoics together with one of the old Pharisees of the better sort, who unquestionably had to show, in the earnest fulfilment of the many requirements of the law, of all the fasts, of all the temple duties, a high degree of self-control and self-conquest. How different soever the presuppositions from which they set out, yet they both would attain personal perfection through their own power, their own efforts, their own performances. They are both penetrated with self-respect, live in self-exaltation and self-glorification. What they both lack is the standpoint of the publican.

## THE SEEKERS.

## § 29.

There is still, however, a class of men to be spoken of, who can find satisfaction in none of the various kinds of righteous-

ness which we before depicted, but yet are also alienated from Christianity, and now are *seeking* a standpoint on which they would find rest. Very many of them we can designate as seekers and non-finders, so far as their religion remains an unsatisfied longing after God. They approach Christianity, but are repelled by "the positive," "the historical," which, as they declare, is irreconcilable with their culture; and if they would then hold to the ideas of natural religion, God, providence, and immortality, they feel again that they lack life and fulness. With Jacobi, they complain that they are Christians in heart, but heathen in head, that they "swim between two streams," of which one lifts them, but the other lets them sink. "They are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7). Of these seekers and non-finders one may say that they indeed constantly hold fast the very standpoint that they would fain give up, nay, feel a need to give up, namely, the standpoint in which the man has the centre of his life in himself. It never comes in their case to a real yielding to God; they constantly prefer their own wisdom to the revelation given to us, and always also hold fast their own righteousness, while lamenting that, in consequence of their culture, they are unable to obey the invitation of the grace of God. When they complain that they are Christians with the heart, but heathen with the head or understanding, they must be answered that they are no Christians with the heart; for to be a Christian with the heart requires a fundamental consciousness of sin and guilt, that we have an open heart for the requirements of God's *holiness*, a heart willing to be judged by God's law. But they have a secret antipathy to God's holiness. They want God only as love and omnipotence; but holiness is obscured to them, and with this also the consciousness of their sin. If these seekers are really to attain to finding, they must first come to the standpoint of the publican. To find this is what is so hard for them.

There are others among the seekers who, their longing not being deep enough, content themselves with natural religion, mixed, it is true, with many Christian elements. It were unjust to deny that on this standpoint, the more naive it is, the more readily may real religion be found, a certain trust in God's providence, combined with upright striving after fulfil-

ment of duty, a need of thanksgiving and prayer, although the prayer has predominantly the manifold earthly needs for its object. Yet this standpoint is also combined with self-righteousness. They need religion only as a *prop* for their morality, as a *help* amid the fatalities of life. But the principal thing is to be performed by their own efforts. Religion has not yet become a fountain of grace to them, from which an entirely new life is to spring. They know not the entire helplessness in which a man becomes aware of his guilt, and so of his desert of punishment before God, of his need of a real forgiveness of sins, and of an entirely new beginning for his life. On the contrary, they live in the endeavour of a partial (fragmentary) improvement (single reforms of their morality), on which, however, Kant has already remarked that it is thoroughly insufficient, that rather a *revolution* is needed.

That men can endure to live under the law is founded partly on their ignorance, the meaning of the law coming only imperfectly home to them; partly on the dim hope or presentiment that good will yet gain the victory, although in a way incomprehensible to us, and that honest effort cannot be in vain. Even Holy Scripture also tells us (Acts x. 35) that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness (that is, according to the measure of his knowledge of the divine will) is *accepted* (*δεκτός*) of God, doubtless not in himself, but only accepted or acceptable to this extent, that the light of the gospel dawns on him with the *righteousness of faith*; that thus even in the morality and religiousness which leads no farther than into the court of the Gentiles, something is contained which God *recognises*, which He *acknowledges*. True, it is not self-righteousness that is acceptable and well-pleasing to Him,—it is rather an abomination to Him,—but no doubt the elements, open to His eye, of true and inner righteousness, elements of obedience, of self-denial, of mercy, of faith, which are present with that insufficient righteousness in a state of bondage, and which Christianity would redeem. For nothing of all that is true and genuine in the previously considered standpoints is to be lost. It is only to be set in its right, that is, subordinate position; it is to be co-ordinated to the whole, and that under the higher principle that renews the whole man.



## SIN.

## IMMORALITY AND SIN.

## § 30.

The moral life under the law which we have hitherto considered has its opposite in the immoral life under the law. But the one, like the other, is included under *sin*. For sin is not only the immoral, the properly immoral; its inmost essence is the irreligious, is unbelief, which, according to experience, is also found where life in the worldly sphere is relatively moral. But even if we cannot say that all sin in the worldly sphere shows itself as immorality, yet we may, nay, we must say that all immorality is sin, because it is a breach of God's law ("sin is the transgression of the law," *ἀνομία*, 1 John iii. 4), because it is unrighteousness (*ἀδικία*, John vii. 18), personal abnormality, not merely in the relation of the man to himself and to other men, but specially in relation to God. And even so we must say, that as there exists an inner connection between the moral and the religious, so also between the immoral and the irreligious. Irreligiousness or frivolity, consistently carried out, must land in immorality; and carried out or dominant immorality must, as experience confirms by numberless examples, at length lead to irreligiousness, to enmity to religion. The irreligion may long lie hidden, may remain latent beneath the merely immoral, yet it must at last appear. But irreligion may also hide, and remain hidden from the man, under the forms of morality; and it lies latent at the foundation of every form of legal righteousness, in which the man has the centre of his life in himself; but at last for this morality there must come a point of time when it is placed before a great alternative: either to give up all its own righteousness, and to bow under the gospel of grace, or else to enter on a conflict with this gospel, whereby it is then led to self-deception and lying, as we see it in the Pharisees in the time of Christ, and since that time in many other forms. In the beginning of our race, sin in fact took its origin from the religious sphere, and had in this its root, as revolt from God,

as unbelief and disobedience to an express commandment. And in the same sphere it must also end; and the conflict between faith and unbelief becomes the last great and decisive conflict which must be fought out, as well by the race as by the individual man.

The chief forms of sin against which each one who follows after righteousness must contend we know already.<sup>1</sup> Every man that comes into this world of sin and illusion is also led into that mystic wood that Dante depicts in the introduction to his *Inferno*, where he strives upwards to a sunny height (that of the ideal), but where three monsters meet him,—a spotted panther, the type of sensuality; a lion in the rage of hunger, the type of pride; and a voracious lean wolf, the type of the covetousness that is never satisfied, however much it may get. Against these monsters the nobler in the heathen world have already fought. Christianity has thrown a new light on this conflict, in teaching us that there is a higher spiritual power, a higher principle of will, that works through these monsters, and shows us in the background the demoniac powers and the devil, as the enemy of God and man (Eph. vi. 12), and shows that the fight that man has to fight in this world is interwoven with a conflict of the higher world of spirits. And although in this conflict there is offered to man a superhuman help, the grace of God in Christ, yet here again the great danger threatens of man repelling this grace. And hereby there is formed a new kind, an entirely new circle of sins, unknown to the old heathenism.

## TEMPTATION AND PASSION.

## § 31.

As our problem here is to represent the development of sin in the single personal human life, we first consider the single sinful action. This is committed by the man falling into temptation, according to the profound teaching of the Apostle James: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth

<sup>1</sup> Compare the General Part, § 29.

he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James i. 13-15). God tempts no man to sin, although God *proves* man, to confirm him in good. Man is tempted to sin by his own lust, which does not exclude the presence of an external tempter. Lust is egoistic desire under the incitement of impulse. But the action is not yet performed; it still lies with the man to combat the lust, or by the free choice of his will to yield himself to it. Therefore it is said by the apostle, "When lust hath *conceived*, it bringeth forth sin." Lust is represented as a woman that has to be fecundated in order to bear. By what? We answer, by the *fancy*. For between the lusts (the desires) and the fancy a magical relation exists. While lust awakes, there is formed a fancy picture, which presents itself to lust with a mighty "incitement and allurements," a magical juggle, be it a picture of sensuality or of honour and worldly greatness, of might and influence, of a crown, a laurel wreath, the applause of public opinion, or else a picture of earthly possession, like Naboth's vineyard to Ahab (1 Kings xxi.), or fancy pictures of far smaller realities, but which have a mighty attraction just for this man's lust. The picture first presents itself to the lust only in the mirror of possibility, but with the colours of reality, and works like magic by promising pure happiness and joy. If the man is able to put to flight this fancy picture, he conquers in the temptation, and the voice of truth is again distinctly heard within. But in many histories of temptation it recurs, that instead of being expelled, it is retained; one stands before it, finds pleasure in the quiet contemplation of it ("pray tarry, thou art so fair!"), yet with the reservation that one does not need to yield to it, and to admit it into his volition. That this secret delighting, this tarrying to view forbidden fruit, is something very dangerous, is usually perceived all too late. For by such inner occupation with the thing, one comes more and more under the power of the fancy. Lust gains inner strength, and increases to *passion*. We deceive ourselves with the idea that we still possess our freedom of choice, and that we can still retreat, till we discover at last that this is impossible.

The theologians of the Middle Ages designated this very dangerous delighting as *delectatio morosa*, that is, *lingering lust*, lingering, namely, in beholding forbidden fruit. We already have a picture and example in the history of the Fall, in Eve, who, instead of saying to the tempter, "Depart from me, Satan!" continued to view the tree, that it was good to eat of it (lust of the flesh), that it was a pleasant tree (lust of the eyes), and that it made wise (pride of life). All this glittered from the tree to her, promising enjoyment and happiness. Her delight, her lust in beholding, ended accordingly with the sinful action, while she took of the fruit and ate. Of every temptation it holds true, that in the sense here indicated there is *periculum in morâ*, danger in any delay, in any tarrying. For in temptation the *moment* has an infinite import; with each moment passion rises; and many a one had been preserved from sin, redeemed from evil, had he but used the few moments that were granted him to flee, while the immediately following moments belonged exclusively to passion. As a deep connection exists between duty and the moment, so also between passion and the moment. Joseph, as regards Potiphar's wife, at once saw that there was *periculum in morâ*, tarried not, engaged not at all in contemplations and transactions, but took to flight, and let the temptress retain only his mantle. Schiller has excellently depicted the destructiveness in the *delectatio morosa* in another sphere, namely, in his *Wallenstein*. The latter tarries by the possibility present for him to break loose from the emperor and take the command into his own hands. He sees himself in spirit as a mighty prince, commanding and giving laws in the affairs of Europe; while he constantly reserves to himself the possibility of giving up these criminal plans. He engages with the enemy in preliminary negotiations, yet with the tacit reservation that he can break them off at pleasure, till at last he sees himself so entangled in a web, which is now more than a web of thoughts, that he cannot retrace his steps, and is forced to the decisive choice. Even external circumstances, fate and accident, have conspired with, and help the tempter, till "the sin is finished."

In passion "lust conceives," in that the fancy picture so penetrates it that it becomes the fertilizing, impelling, and compelling *motive* for the choosing and deciding *will*. Then

sin is born. With the inner decision sin is already born. For the man has now made his choice. Yet sin is finished only when by means of execution it becomes an action. And when the sinful action is finished, it brings forth death, that is, inner and outer misery,—a witness of the deceitfulness of sin (*ἀπάτη τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, Heb. iii. 13 ; comp. Rom. i. 11, Eph. iv. 22) which allured the man, promising happiness from that which led to so sad an issue.

## HABIT AND VICE.

## § 32.

By repetition the individual gains readiness in sinning, and sin becomes *habit*, by which the organs of the soul as well as of the body are changed into “members and instruments of sin” (Rom. vi. 13, 19). But the animating principle in habit is passion, which is now no more acute but chronic, has assumed the character of the constant, the regularly recurrent, so that it can also be designated as desire (desire of honour, dominion, gain, etc.). The relation between passion and habit corresponds to the relation between the dynamical and the mechanical, or that between soul and body. By means of custom passion builds its body, and exercises as well the spiritual as the bodily organs for the service of sin ; and conversely, while the organs gain a greater readiness in committing sin, they on their side again set passion in motion by their natural impulse. An action and reaction here takes place. “ Out of the heart,” says Christ, “ come evil thoughts : murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are the things that defile a man ; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man ” (Matt. xv. 19 f.). And again the apostle says, “ As ye have given your *members* as servants of uncleanness and of iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members as servants of righteousness unto holiness ” (Rom. vi. 19), whereby he indicates the importance of the organs as well for good as for evil. The union of habit and passion is *vice*, in which a man becomes a bondman to a particular sin. In the language of daily life, one is accustomed to designate only those sins as vices that



dishonour a man in the eyes of the world, like drunkenness, thieving, unchastity, and the like; as also one understands by an irreproachable, spotless walk in general, merely one that shows no spot on the robe of civil righteousness. But why should not one be at liberty to designate every sin as vice, that gains such a dominion over the man that he becomes its bondman? Why should not pride, envy, malice, gossip, unmercifulness not be called vices, that is, when they have gained such a dominion that the man has forfeited his freedom? On the other hand, we may no doubt speak of faults, failings, weaknesses, when we want to designate a smaller degree of sin, such that the power of resistance is not yet broken.

## RAMIFICATIONS OF SIN.

## § 33.

Among the vices there exists a mutual connection, and one easily leads to another. The three chief directions of sin are closely related, and have a power of attraction for each other. They mutually entwine into each other, like twigs of the same tree (of egoism), and grow out of each other. Faust and Don Juan are always anew becoming comrades, and Harpagon in every way supports them in their undertakings, and himself receives from both of them impulse as well as teaching. Pride, even the most intellectual and spiritual, is not far from a fall into sensuality; and if sensuality must needs defend itself against the accusation of the conscience, it seeks in pride to set itself above the law. Cupidity is akin to both. The covetous man places his trust in uncertain riches instead of in the living God (1 Tim. vi. 17), and while, blinded by the splendour of gold, he trusts in earthly mammon, he yields himself to a false self-exaltation (boasting), which was even reproved by the prophets in those merchants of Tyre whose trade with the riches of the whole world collected there such immense treasures, that the prince of Tyre presumed to say, "I am God; I sit on the throne of God, in the midst of the sea" (Ezek. xxviii. 2). On the other hand, avarice and cupidity, because bound to the earth, are akin to sensual grati-

fication. For though many of these servants of mammon deny themselves sensual delight, and are satisfied to possess the *representation* of all earthly delights, namely, money, yet they seek a sensual delight in the security and comfort of their earthly existence, which is guaranteed to them by money. We find also among the covetous not a few who, after they have gathered a supply for many years, and have obtained the security that seems needful to them, then combine the service of mammon with that of the belly, the ways and means to which are afforded them more richly than others, like that rich countryman in the gospel, who says to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat and drink, and be merry" (Luke xii. 16). Covetousness is also (what is often overlooked) near akin to wastefulness, as both rest upon an egoistic self-willed position towards the earthly mammon, both are qualities belonging to the unfaithful and unjust steward. The common element, the atmosphere, in which all the three chief tendencies of sin find their growth and increase, is illusion and lie.

### § 34.

Each of the chief tendencies has again its inner ramifications. Pride is inseparable from *despising man*. Nevertheless it presents itself as the *desire to rule*, because it will enjoy its elevation by making those despised ones the slaves, whether of its commands or of its opinions and views, and receives their admiration. With this is conjoined *envy*, since pride does not suffer anything to be recognised in others, as every preference of others is felt by the proud one as an injury to his own prerogatives. Does pride meet with opposition, it proceeds to passionate violence, anger, and *hate* which would annihilate the personality of the adversary, to revenge and cruelty. *Distrust* also is attached to pride, since the proud one claims that others shall bow before him, and despise themselves in comparison of him, regards the opposite as a kind of rebellion, and therefore is constantly as on the watch whether any such secret sedition arises on any hand, which is a standing feature in tyrants. In relation to religion, pride appears as opposition to the truth, as the proud man will not be sub-

ordinate and serve (*non serviam*). Self-exaltation and self-idolatry may here gradually pass over into mockery, scorn, and hate of what is holy.

But above all, it must be insisted on that the *lie* proceeds from pride, in that the creature which would occupy an independent position before God, must invent a false image of itself, of God, and of the world, to occupy the place of the truth. The lie ramifies through the whole world of sin; for there is no sin without an ingredient of conscious or unconscious lie and illusion. Next to the lie in the religious sphere, we name, as the strongest utterances of the lie in the worldly sphere, false witness against one's neighbour, defamation, faithlessness and deceit, treachery, dissimulation and hypocrisy.

### § 35.

The lust of the flesh, with gluttony and drunkenness, with such excesses, in which Bacchus leads to Venus and Venus to Bacchus, gives birth to all manner of evil: speaking unadvisedly, anger, quarrelling, striking, revenge, murder. Every one knows, from his school-days, how David's sin against the seventh commandment led him to transgress the sixth also, and murder Uriah. Fleshly lust easily combines with faithlessness, unreliability and unfaithfulness in stewardship, with sloth and carelessness, with dishonesty, which is often a condition of procuring the means for the satisfaction of the lusts, with extravagance, as in the prodigal son, who "devoured his living with harlots." A usual feature in those who give themselves to fleshly lusts, and to an undue care of the body, is *effeminacy*, which may be developed to a refined pleasure-seeking in the most various directions. In certain periods of history, pleasure-seeking appears in connection with luxury as a predominant tendency in all classes of society. Think, for instance, of the fall of the Roman Empire in the time of the imperial rule, when pleasures more and more assumed the character of the repulsive and unnatural, because the natural no longer satisfied; or think on the period preceding the first French Revolution; or, in fine, on our own time, when in certain circles of society the money-power appears united with

an epicureanism degenerating on all sides, forming a striking contrast to the poverty and want in an innumerable mass of individuals, who desire to become partakers of the same pleasures, and threaten society with the overthrow of all that exists.

### § 36.

The lust of the eyes, when it appears under the forms of covetousness, desire of gain, the passion to grow rich, easily unites with *hardness of heart* and mercilessness, and breeds usury, falsity, fraud, robbery. The desire of gain, the passion for riches, and the vices connected therewith, may especially be studied in the history of the children of Israel, who early danced around the golden calf, and in whom the longing for gold forms a national feature. In the evangelical church the publicans—among whom many were rich, and were not without ground so severely judged from the side of the Pharisees—show us a picture of cheating combined with love of money, wherefore the Lord speaks even to them of the unrighteous mammon. The unfaithful steward in the gospel, who besides his unrighteousness appears to have been fond of pleasure and effeminate,—who felt himself unfit to dig, and was ashamed to claim the help of strangers,—and who lets the debtors of his lord re-write their bills, is a type of cunning cheating combined with greed of gain, which recurs down to our own days in great and small stewardships, with false exchanges, swindling schemes and joint-stock concerns, fraudulent bankruptcies, artificial money crises, artificially raising and lowering the funds, and so on. Much unrighteous mammon is in our time gained in this manner, and it is at the same time to be remembered that unrighteous mammon is not only what is gained in unrighteousness, but also what is possessed and used in unrighteousness.

Another chief branch of the lust of the eyes, but which has a more ideal stamp than avarice and covetousness, is *phenomenalism*, by which we mean a pursuit of the phenomenal merely as such,—a pursuit which, with entire indifference to the essence, is directed only to the forms and shells of things, apart from the kernel. In relation to the person himself, phenomenalism expresses itself as vanity, as delight in seem-

ing, in shining, in representing. Many who are greedy of money, and grudge both themselves and others an enjoyment, appear on another occasion as squanderers, for instance with magnificent illuminations and banquets, with splendid contributions to one or another public object, not as if it lay in their heart thus to delight or profit, but in this manner to let the lustre of their gold shine out into the world.

In relation to the things in the world, phenomenalism appears as an ardent longing ever to see or hear something new, for which in Scripture the Athenians are specially blamed (Acts xvii. 21), who regarded the Apostle Paul and his sermon as an interesting (piquant) phenomenon, as entertainment for an hour, but without taking any interest in the thing itself. In phenomenalism the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing; but pleasure is taken only in the surface of life, in appearances merely as such, of which enough cannot be had. The man lives on the news of the town, on anecdotes, jokes, and the reading of newspapers. To very many people in this special sense the text is applicable, "We spend our years like a tale that is told." Their life passes like an insignificant street-talk, a passing drawing-room conversation. The serious allotments of which they are witnesses, in the life of individuals as of whole nations, the world-moving conflict between light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness, becomes to them only a play for idle contemplation, that asks nothing farther about contents and meaning, but only, "What is there new?" Phenomenalism casts itself on all objects; and also the interest that many have in art and science is to them only an interest in novelties, "the newest appearances." The same applies to the political interest of a countless number: a seeking and pursuing changes of scene merely for the sake of change. In ages when phenomenalism is predominant, there is at the same time developed an empty and meaningless rhetoric, a fine mode of speech, only for the good sound, where the only question is whether the speaker has words at his command,—a verbosity which in our days has received a dangerous development in our Parliaments and other political assemblies, in the manifold meetings for the so-called testing of weighty and generally useful questions, burning questions of the day, of which now-a-days there are so many. Here



certainly the statement finds its fullest application, that men spend their days "like a tale."

To phenomenalism belongs also the idle activity, the unwearyed but empty and objectless busying, in which one makes himself believe that he is doing much, or at least is entirely occupied by weighty tasks, while in truth he is living without any serious task, without any right object of life; is executing only seeming works, is playing with hollow nuts, and pouring into the cask of the Danaids. Holberg, to whom the great merit belongs of having scourged phenomenalism in its most various forms, has given us a type of this empty activity in his comedy, *The Man who never has Time* (the Busy Man). Mr. Muchery never finds time to collect himself and rest, is fully occupied by his business, from morning to night in a constant collision of duties, because he wants to fulfil a number of duties at once, but accomplishes nothing, fulfils none of his many duties. To the same category belongs also *inconstancy*, unsteadiness (*ἡ ἀκαταστασία*), when one, allured by the multitude of phenomena, lets fall what he had just taken in hand, in order to seize something new, as none of all the objects really fills the soul. To-day one is a liberal, to-morrow reactionary; to-day one is an enthusiast for Hegel, to-morrow for Kant; to-day one joins the Home Mission, to-morrow goes over to Grundvigianism;<sup>1</sup> the day after, one finds that the Union of Protestants (*Protestantenverein*) and its rationalistic theology have after all their great significance. But nowhere is the foot planted firmly, for the man "is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. i. 8). Holberg's comedy, *The Inconstant One* (the milliner Lucretia), in whom more than one soul lives, moves in a lower sphere. She wants incessantly to enjoy her freedom of choice in relation to the things (the phenomena) that come before her, but never attains to an actual choice. For when she has made an apparent choice, and begun to carry out a decision, another picture appears in her fancy, and she leaps to a new choice. At last she would marry; but when the wedding is to take place, she is thinking of another, and nothing comes of it. The special mark of phenomenalism in all its forms is this, that the will is not to be filled by any contents nor bound by any neces-

<sup>1</sup> [Grundvig, a Danish High Churchman.—TRANS.]

sity. What, then, he who is possessed by such a desire lacks is *earnestness*; for earnestness is only present where definite contents become a power determining the will. Or, so far as a certain earnestness is to be found in the phenomenalist, it is but a narrow-minded earnestness, which feels bound by merely finite forms, forms of the most trifling kind, as in pedantry and city life, or else by fashion, convenience, etiquette, the valid court ceremonial, and so on, so bound that such things are to him of enormous importance, and are the only things he is in earnest about. In phenomenism there is ever an element of lying. But as this element is limited to illusion and empty vanity (*ἡ ματαιότης*), one cannot at once put it on the same footing as the proper and earnestly meant lie, by which the man seeks to escape the necessity of the law, of the good and the true, or to evade them, and by which he is bound to some egoistic object, as to a feigned, false necessity. Yet there are also among the phenomenists such as find pleasure in the so-called innocent and harmless lies, and who have pleasure in entertaining others with untruths about the most unimportant and indifferent things, pleasure in all manner of invented phenomena or events. Then the transition is very easy to manifest and earnest lying and mendacity in character.

### § 37.

The mutual ramifications of the vices go, with the infinite difference of human individualities and of the relations of human life, themselves also into infinitude. One and the same vice may be developed from entirely different starting-points, and thereby receives its special character. Envy, for example, may be developed from pride in equals, who grudge each other their real or imagined advantages; but it can also be developed from pride in those more humbly placed in society, who envy those above them, and endure nothing that distinguishes them, nothing eminent, as that frequently occurs, especially in all democrats. It may be developed from covetousness; it may arise from love or being in love, where one envies a more fortunate rival. Calumny may proceed from enmity and hatred, but also from mere pheno-

menalism, because one needs a new subject for entertainment (Sheridan's *School for Scandal*), wherewith, however, as a rule, an ingredient of malice and self-satisfaction is combined. Lying may proceed from pride, and the source of the lie at the creation was pride (*"Eritis, sicut Deus"*); but in daily life the lie may also be born of sensual lust or greed of gain, as a means to the end, as a bad supposed necessity. The same holds true of other derived vices. A complete catalogue of the vices (as also of the virtues), where the single vices figure as firm, delimited powers, is, on account of the infinite combinations in which they occur under ever new shades, an impossibility.

## DIFFERENCES IN SIN.

## § 38.

In their great and manifold multitude, sins are distinguished from each other, not only by the difference of the objects to which the lust is directed, the difference of the forbidden fruits, as well as of those good things of life and duties which are injured, not only by the different instruments by the help of which they are practised, be they those of thought and of the eye, or of the tongue and the hand, not only by the different form in which the law is injured, according as they are transgressions or omissions; but also by the *different degrees* in the energy of the sinful will. The degree designates the inner strength as well of the good as of the bad will; and is measured by the hindrances, the resistance that must be overcome. The good will must overcome the temptations to evil; the evil and bad will must overcome the hindrances that conscience, in connection with external relations, places in its way. It belongs to the paradoxes to deny the difference of sins, to maintain that he who steals a penny and he who kills his mother are both in equal measure guilty. The Stoics, who set up this paradox, appeal no doubt to this, that he who is only a yard deep under water drowns just as much as he who is 500 fathoms deep, that in both cases one is bad, or the opposite of what he should be; wherefore also Draco, the first lawgiver of Athens, imposed the penalty of death

for every crime. They also lean on the argument that it is indifferent whether one is only one mile or a hundred miles distant from the city; for in both cases he is outside the city (outside morality), while the point is to be inside. The truth in this paradox is the absolute difference of essence between good and evil, virtue and vice, the untruth, the opposite one-sidedness to that of the moderate morality. For if this lays all the weight on quantity, while disregarding quality, Stoicism holds fast spasmodically to quality, and places quantity entirely out of view. It stands exclusively on the essence (the idea) of the thing, but does not regard the relation between essence and reality, nor that the good as well as the bad will, in entering into actual life, gets a *history*, under which it, as it were, takes a bodily form, and thereby assumes new determinations. It is certain, indeed, that even the smallest sin injures the essence of virtue, the principle of the good; that all the unrighteous also have the brand of unrighteousness on themselves. But if the will is to develop itself into character, if the essence is to assume an external *form*, if the moral power must contend with hindrances, there necessarily occur differences of degree, where one may speak of a more or less, of a nearer or farther; and by means of these quantitative determinations, new determinations of quality or inner essence may also be developed, since a man by continuing in a sin may attain at length to a new *degree* of egoism and of evil will. Common sense and moral feeling, as expressed in ordinary life, will also ever oppose the proposition that there is no difference between sins. Holberg, who agreeably to his whole standpoint cherished a preference for the quantitative determinations in morality, has on this point combated Stoicism *con amore*: "If one steals an apple from the garden of a wealthy man, cuts a twig from another man's wood, and commits several actions of this sort about the same time, he yet sins less than he who murders a single innocent man, if one would not make, say, the arm or head of a man equal to an apple or twig." Against the Stoic paradox which would annul the difference between nearer and farther, he remarks with reason: "What lies a mile distant from a place is divided from it indeed, as well as what lies a hundred miles from it; but it does not follow that both things lie

equally distant from the place. All that deviates from the truth is a lie, but not equally great ; for one lie may approach the truth more nearly than another, as one wrong way may conduct the wanderer farther from the highway than another, although both are wrong ways. He goes most astray who wanders in the way that leads farthest from the goal ; as the mariner most misses his way who sails before a wind blowing directly from the harbour. For though the north-west is not the same as the north wind, yet the difference is not so great as between north and south." He adds to this, in his peculiar way : " If one earnestly considers the thing, it appears that the Stoic doctrine on this point is not only false and unfounded, but also foolish and childish, and one may wonder that so many eminent men have zealously defended it." <sup>1</sup>

The Holy Scripture unites both the points of view mentioned, essence as well as reality. The Apostle James says, " Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all " (Jas. ii. 10). He looks into the essence of sin, and from thence contemplates all sins and all sinners as alike. He who commits one sin has thereby essentially committed them all. By each sin we insult not only the majesty of the law, but of God the holy Lawgiver, by setting our will in the place of His ; by every sin the unity of the just and pure sentiment is destroyed, that requires a perfect agreement between the human will and the will of God. But in many other passages the Holy Scripture occupies the standpoint of reality, and emphasizes the difference of degree. Christ says to Pilate, " He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin " (John xix. 11) ; and again He says that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for all those cities where He Himself had preached the gospel of grace (Matt. xi. 24). Those are mentioned who are not far from the kingdom of God (Mark xii. 34), those who are nigh and those who are far off (Eph. ii. 17 ; Acts ii. 39) ; whence it clearly appears that the Lord and His apostles do not teach that it is indifferent whether one be one mile distant from the city or a hundred.

The difference of degree between sins is expressed in the distinction between sins of ignorance (1 Tim. i. 13) and

<sup>1</sup> Holberg, *Moralske Tanker*, p. 126 ff., Rode's edition.



deliberate sins (1 Tim. iv. 2), between sins of weakness (like Peter's denial) and sins of wickedness (Judas, the mockers, 2 Pet. iii. 3), flagitious sins (Jas. v. 4, of the rich who withhold their wages from the labourers), between human, bestial, and devilish sins. As a special class may be mentioned the so-called "infinite sins,"<sup>1</sup> the greatness of which is undefinable and immeasurable, when, namely, the single sin is followed by an infinite, immense host, wherefore they have also been called *peccata caudata* (tail-sins). Thus an unjust and unconscientious declaration of war involves an immense and quite innumerable host of injustices against the life, health, property of men, peaceful family and civil life, trade and industry, and so on. A false bankruptcy, or an unprincipled joint-stock swindle, which at last breaks out in a crisis or a crash, which produces an incomputable destruction of the well-being of innocent and guileless individuals and families, likewise belongs to the infinite or unmeasurable sins, sins with an illimitable tail. Finally, a distinction has also been made between remissible sins, that is, those for which there exists the possibility of forgiveness, and sins unto death (1 John v. 16),—a distinction which, no doubt, admits of application to the Christian life, as we must understand by sins unto death those in which men so sin against offered, or even against already received grace, that they thereby become excluded from grace, and fall a prey to spiritual death; whereupon it is true the question again is, Whether the death be only temporal, or that death from which there is no moral resurrection.

## STEPS OF DEVELOPMENT AND STATES OF THE LIFE OF SIN.

## § 39.

However important the distinctions we have discussed may be, yet the single sin can only be rightly estimated when we observe how it emerges and is connected with the entire degree of development of the sinful will, in which the man now is. For when the man yields himself to sin, there inevitably occurs a reaction from the side of the good. Under the

<sup>1</sup> Sailer, *Christliche Moral*, I. 257.

continued struggle with the power of good, whose highest manifestation within the Christian world is God's revealed law and gospel, sin grows not merely in its degree, its intensity, but it advances to another, a higher step. On each of these steps the egoistic will gives itself a new impress of *character*; and to each of these steps there corresponds a definite state, a form of personal existence, which in the meantime is to be considered as standing and remaining.

In the history of the development of sin there occurs a constant progress from nature to spirit, since at first it emerges in relative unconsciousness, and from this is developed to self-conscious, purely pneumatical egoism. This progress may be more fully described as a progress from particularistic to universal egoism. The man at first gives himself to sin in a single, special way of manifestation; his will is bound in a single direction, and he has some bosom sin, without his whole sentiment being already poisoned by it. But the farther the man proceeds in self-deception and lying, the more does egoism assume a pneumatic (conscious) character, and that so that it more and more embraces the whole man, and extends its impurity over all departments of the soul's life. No doubt egoism will reveal itself in the single individual predominantly in one of the chief directions of sin; and not without reason has it been remarked that, on account of the limitation that is given to each individuality, no single man can have all vices. But the special dominating tendency of sin may well become the throne and seat for universal (all-controlling) egoism; and where circumstances favour, the latter will also be inclined and ready to proceed to every conceivable form of sin that ever occurs in actual life.

As different steps and states of corruption, we mention security and self-conscious bondage, self-deception, hypocrisy, and obduracy.

*Security.—Self-conscious Bondage.*

§ 40.

Security, as commonly understood, is the state in which one fears no danger, where one is cheerful and hopes the best.

We all begin our life in security. For security (*securitas*, that is, freedom from care) is the state of the natural man, that of heathenism, the state where the man lives on "without law." We all begin with unbiassed faith in life, and are unfit to believe in death. For even when we see before our eyes and around us death and misfortune, for a long time we cannot imagine, nor make ourselves familiar with the idea, that these things should also hit ourselves; at any rate, we think of it as of something infinitely remote, as a quite indefinite and cloudy possibility. And just as we begin with belief in life, so also with believing in our own hearts, and do not suspect that we have within us an enemy who threatens us with spiritual death. We are thus all born optimists, spun round by "Maja,"<sup>1</sup> by illusion, as it is said of man in Claudius:

"Born and nourished  
Of woman wondrously,  
He comes and sees and hears,  
*And learns not the deceit.*"

And as we do not mark the deception and fraud in the phenomena of this world, neither do we see through the deceitfulness (*ἡ ἀπάτη*) of sin, which mirrors before us an enjoyment in which we are to find mere happiness. Security, as a sinful state in a more special sense, consists only in this, that a man in committing a sin, and beginning to fall a prey to passion, makes light of it, and in his levity does not consider the consequences, neither the external nor the internal consequences for the development of his own character. He thinks, "There is no need; there is no danger in the matter." True, he becomes aware of the reaction of the law and of the conscience, forms also likely the purpose to desist from this sin; but as soon as the temptation recurs, he discovers, with some astonishment, that the previous fall is repeated. However, that does not much affect him; for, of course, he will have a care in future. He has his free will, and can always enter on a better way. But, contrary to all expectation, he finds that he is involved in the bondage of sin, bound by a

<sup>1</sup> Maja is an Indian goddess, the emblem of deceptive appearance, of the illusions of this world. She is a deceiver.

fetter that he cannot shake off, and discovers that it is quite otherwise with the freedom of the will than he had thought. He notices by degrees that there is yet another view of life than the optimist. With most men this process, in which the fair illusions of security evaporate, only occurs gradually and slowly. With some, again, these mists part all at once, when, that is, a specially strong temptation brings them suddenly to a deep fall; as with the disciple Peter, who denied the Lord shortly after he had thought himself in the completest security, or as with Gretchen in *Faust*. One now begins to understand that word, that every man has his price for which he can be bought, that is, that there is for each one a temptation to which he is unequal.

In very many cases, the surroundings of the man participate in his transition into the bondage of sin. For, in unspeakable security, parents and tutors allow it to happen that their children assimilate, appropriate what is fitted to feed the sensual impulses, let them, without judgment, without the application of any moral and pedagogic criticism, take part in social pleasures of every kind, and altogether let the æsthetic tendency gain an undue advantage over the ethical. Carelessly, in the schools, the endeavour is to develop in the children ambition and rivalry as the chief motives, and thus the germs of pride are fostered. Carelessly parents develop in their children respect for the earthly mammon, impress upon them, by their example, or by the views of life which they constantly express, the extraordinary importance belonging to an eminent social position, or how the great thing is "to make a good match." One need not then be surprised that the rising sons and daughters "trust"—which the prophet calls a folly—"in their own heart," when their tutors day after day have preceded them in this.

#### § 41.

When any one has become conscious that he is in the state of bondage, the internal conflicts begin. He would free himself from this state, with which his conscience reproaches him. But where sin fully carries out its course of development, he is more and more fettered by passion, which after

each gratification again desires a new one, and is never satisfied. Ever anew purposes are formed, and ever anew their execution fails in the vain struggle. One defeat follows after another; and by each defeat the power of sin grows stronger, whether the man is dominated by a sensual passion, or carried away by the demons of avarice or of ambition, through their alluring phantasms, to actions, and thereby involved in relations, in which the dark powers hold him fast, and drive him forward on the way to destruction. Now, as the execution of every purpose is conditioned by the hope that the execution is possible, but as this hope more and more fails, the purposes also more and more become mere weak purposes, mere desires, unfruitful wishes; and at last, when every hope is extinct, the man allows himself to be carried along the stream of destruction. Now, it is not indeed the case in all individuals, that the state of bondage—which the honest striver also knows, who groans under the hard yoke of duty, of which the Apostle Paul (Rom. vii.) has given us a picture—leads to this extremity, to this abyss. There are in this a multitude of transitions varying from each other, a great difference in the strength of passion and of habit, as well as in the power of resistance, whereby the progress of passion may be checked. But one thing is common to all who are in this state. That levity which belongs to the state of security has been changed in them all to a secret dejection. For dejection is a consequence of the arrested development of the good, of hindered freedom, as well as of the urgent requirement of the law, which weighs upon their soul like a burden that grows ever heavier. As a fact, dejection is already present in the state of levity, and rests within like a background of care and anxiety, although the man is not conscious of it. In the midst of security it often asserts itself; in the midst of light-hearted joy it breaks forth for a moment, and the man does not then himself know what makes him so sad. He is sad and out of humour about—nothing, that is, nothing definite. And this secret dejection does not proceed, as many think, from the state of the body, though this may contribute to it, but from indwelling sin, from the disturbance and dissipation present in the deepest foundation of existence. And in the state of bondage the



man experiences that dejection is the inseparable companion of sin.

The more that sin and corruption grow, and the man becomes fully conscious of it, the more does dejection grow also, and changes at last into *despair*, which is a state of entire hopelessness, where all possibilities have vanished, all gates and ways are closed to a man. There is a despair for a hard fate; and it happens not seldom, that a man, in consequence of a single severe stroke, makes a sudden leap from his natural state of security into the state of despair; be it that he has lost a beloved human being, or has lost his means, or in any other misfortune. Against this form of despair even heathenism has a remedy, namely, resignation, submission to the inevitable. But the deepest despair is that in which the man gives up hope, not merely for this or that which he called his own, but for—*himself* as a moral being. Yet there is here one sustaining and saving power, namely, faith in God. Despair may, and should become the transition to salvation, if the man only desponds and despairs of himself and his own power, but does not give up his God. Nay, the relatively moral man must also at last despair of himself, must cry out with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But in this expression of entire inability, of deepest helplessness, there is latent a hope of redemption, the hope that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

Meanwhile there is still, apart from conversion and faith, another way by which the man may attempt to escape from the oppressive state of bondage, free from the reproaches of the law and of the conscience. This way is self-deception.

*Self-Deception. The Morality of Compromises.—Scepticism.—Denial of the Moral Order of the World.—Indifference.—Nihilism.*

#### § 42.

Through *self-deception* the man may imagine that he can avoid as well the dangers of despair as the pains of conversion. Sin, that is, may philosophize. The egoistic will

may take the understanding into its service, and may form for itself a morality of sin, that is put in the place of duty and of conscience, and lets sin appear to it in a new and different light, which pacifies it, and helps it to recover the lost security (antinomianism).

The beginnings of a morality of sin are found in a great number of men, who will not quite break with the morality of conscience, but would make *compromises* between it and their own natural inclinations (the "two masters," Matt. vi. 24). Many men spend their whole life in constant agreements between sin and conscience, whereby the sting of conscience is more and more blunted. At first the man persuades himself, or lets himself be persuaded, that the idea of the unconditioned requirement of the law is one too high and overdrawn, by which one must not let himself be entangled. He understands, indeed, that without morality the world cannot stand, and that he himself cannot stand without it. But now he gives ear to the current doctrine, and appropriates it, that one must not commit oneself to extreme ideal requirements, and that it is a dangerous thing to plunge into religious and moral over-refinements. He sympathizes therefore with a "sound" (reasonable) morality of the middle-way, in opposition to a vigorous morality of duty. But the mediocre-morality he so understands that in many cases it is allowed to sin, provided that one does not push it quite too far, but preserves moderation in sinning. The longer he practises this doctrine, the better does he also learn to discover excuses, nay, fit grounds, by which he justifies his open sins. He learns more and more to forgive himself, and forms for himself a *system of absolution*, in which the chief ground for absolution is wont to be this, that "others," nay, "many," do the same, and that it is something that one must needs allow to human weakness. After he has attained this knowledge, he has no longer even the design to lay aside the sins with which he is reproached. He now feels himself at rest, although at times he may have to endure a small contest with conscience, from which, however, he soon betakes himself again to business and to needful diversions. Among the abilities which he exercises there is conspicuous the ability to *forget* whatever has been wrong in his previous life, and to banish from his mind moral

inconveniences. Yet this contentment or security of his is no longer that immediate, naive, and relatively innocent thing of which we previously spoke. It is a reflected, an artificially made security. The levity in which he lives is no more the naive, so to say, accidental levity in which innocence, without well knowing it, comes to a fall. It is a levity in which there is method, and by which he wards off the dejection connected with the state of bondage, combats it, or when it has overtaken him, can struggle and escape from it. In reality, he is in a moral state of dissolution, a progressive moral and spiritual decay.

An author,<sup>1</sup> who for the rest regards moral phenomena as mere natural phenomena, has aptly depicted the system of absolutism that is found with many men of the world: "He has an excellent, good, amiable wife; but despite this he does not cease to engage in a new amour, to-day with one, to-morrow with another, is not even afraid to declare himself for polygamy—that is, in practice; for he is not disposed to deny the moral importance of marriage. But he appeals to this, that others do it also, or quotes in justification of his way of life even this or that prince, to whose majesty such relations did no injury. He is quite a patriot, enthusiastic perhaps for his fatherland, and yet permits himself to defraud the revenue. If his attention be drawn to the injustice, he can mention so many otherwise respectable houses of business who often evade taxes and stamps. He is conservative, values authority, values his bishop and his burgomaster. But when the year 1848 comes, he conducts himself like a radical, speaks against State and Church, and subscribes and hawks about addresses. If one points out to him the immorality of his conduct, he declares that his sentiments have remained the same. He calls his procedure behaving according to the relations of the time (howling with the wolves among which one lives)." This is indisputably a true picture from the life. Only one must call in question whether it is justifiable, with the author quoted, to conceive such an individual as a mere natural phenomenon, the consideration being confined entirely to the domain of "natural science" (Rée, I. 137). We for

<sup>1</sup> A. Rée, *Wanderungen eines Zeitgenossen auf dem Gebiete der Ethik* (Wanderings of a Contemporary in the Field of Ethics), Hamburg 1857, I. 113.

our part have an entirely different judgment on this well-known moral phenomenon.

As another example of the process of moral dissolution, and of the morality of compromises, we may quote the Danish poet (died 1877), Paludan Müller's *Adam Homo*, a poem which paints before our eyes a picture of moral decay, corruption under all forms of respectability, a progressive sinking and falling of the inner man amid continued concessions to the flesh at the cost of the spirit, a continued lulling of the conscience amid light-hearted appeasements, a continued forgetting of the past, whereby it is sought to preserve and maintain one's secure rest of soul. Adam Homo's history is in actual human life a very common history, which the poet will express even by the title of his poem.

Yet these are all mere weak beginnings. There are deeper stages of destruction. The morality of compromises, in which the moral requirement of the conscience is still in part recognised, is only a half-measure. Where sin thoroughly and logically philosophizes, one must advance beyond this incompleteness. Right security is only gained when, instead of the single and partial indulgence hitherto granted to oneself, one can obtain a general indulgence once for all; or, in other words, when one gains the view and conviction that remission or forgiveness of sins is something that one in fact has no need of, because the entire morality of duty and conscience belongs to an antiquated and overcome standpoint.

### § 43.

The fundamental philosophical beginning to the morality of sin is *scepticism*. We do not in this place investigate the importance that may theoretically attach to the proposition that one must doubt all things in order to attain truth. Neither will we here consider that nobler manifestation of doubt which may serve a man as transition to truth, because, that is, in his doubt there exists a secret faith in truth, and likewise a longing after it. We speak here of the doubt by which a man seeks to escape from the truth, because he would gain a security against conscience and against the fulfilment of duty. He then makes a practical application of

the sentence, that one must doubt all things, that not only for free thought, but also for free will, nothing dare be fixed beforehand, if one would find the truth. He even finds a solace in the thought that it is by no means decided whether there is a supernatural and supersensual world, not decided whether there is a moral order of the world, and whether duty and conscience are real powers, as they may also possibly be mere imaginations, originating through habit, convenience, custom, tradition, and education, and possibly also have only arisen in ignorant ages, when right views had not yet been attained. In consequence, however, of the inner connection which in fact exists between religion and morality, this scepticism is also applied to religion, to Christianity, and the man is consoled to find that it is by no means sure that there is a living God. Possibly there is no other God than nature, possibly man is only a "product of nature," the history of the world, as one has read somewhere, only "a physico-chemical process." He who is animated by the wish to deceive himself in this direction, by this mode of thought, gets in our days the help of a very extensive literature not only God-denying, but spirit-denying and purely naturalistic, in which he will find abundant support.

After the individual we have here in view has ranged about for a time on the "dry heath" of scepticism, his scepticism at last passes over into dogmatism, that is, into a body of definite dogmas that deny the moral order of the world. He now convinces himself that what stands fast is not the ethical and religious, but the *physical*, this world of the senses, of which he himself forms a member, with his impulses and inclinations. Instead of the old morality of duty and conscience, he now constructs for himself a morality in which instinct and natural impulse take the place of duty; in which the object of life is placed in the greatest possible sum of earthly enjoyments; in which the opposition between good and evil is replaced by the opposition between the agreeable and disagreeable, the useful and hurtful, what is prudent and what is stupid; in which the highest moral principle is as follows: "Thou shalt love thyself above all, and all others and all else for thine own sake (or so far as it is of use to thee)." In this his merely physical view of life he is covered



and secured against God, against Christianity, against a moral order of the world, against imputation, responsibility, and judgment. He knows he is perfectly secure; for he knows what stands fast. He knows the truly positive, what rests on experience.

That men invent theories to enable them quietly to sin on, is denied by those who derive all human error from ignorance, from human imperfection and limitation. Now, although the Holy Scripture by no means denies that error may arise from ignorance, yet it by no means explains error from ignorance alone, but finds its deepest spring in the human will. Thus the Apostle Paul speaks in 1 Tim. i. 19 of "some who have put away a good conscience, and thereby concerning faith have made shipwreck." The ethical is here represented as determining and deciding for the religious and dogmatic, in opposition to the ordinary view, which in other passages is likewise found in the apostle. But here he designates the sinful walk, the sacrifice of the good conscience, as the cause why these men afterwards also gave up the Christian faith and the knowledge rooted therein. They feel themselves hampered by the doctrines of the faith in the satisfaction of their sinful lusts, wherefore they by degrees let go those doctrines which are accompanied by such inconvenient remembrances and warnings, and give ear to and receive instead false, but for sinful man at any rate more convenient doctrines. This invention and adoption of erroneous doctrines in the interest of sin, the Holy Scripture designates as *πλάνη*, that is, as an error, a wandering that is founded in the will of man, which deliberately puts phantasms in the place of truth. The apostle warns against this self-deception when he says to people who denied a moral order of the world, "Be not deceived (*μὴ πλανᾶσθε*, wander not), God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). Of this the Apostle John speaks when he says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (*ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν*), and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). Nay, Paul says that God, in punishment for the sins of men, "sends them strong delusion (*ἐνέργεια πλάνης*, 2 Thess. ii. 11), to believe a lie." To believe a lie — with this the apostle declares what there is in the so-called conviction of such

men. Their conviction is only a sham conviction. For real conviction consists in the truth itself being present in a personality. Yet their conviction is a faith, a confidence and certainty, though imaginary, in which they feel themselves secured, and as under guarantee. And this their security grows from day to day. For the farther they remove themselves from the supernatural and supersensual world, in which the law of holiness and righteousness rules, the deeper they sink, as to their inner man, into the lower regions, and that according to the law of gravity, with ever-increasing swiftness, the more must the higher region of truth lose all reality for them. Their eyes become dull for the supersensual, their ears deaf for the voices of the spirit, that everywhere sound in the world, although these voices are not heard in the streets. They require proofs, and know not that, if they do not grasp the truth, the defect lies in their organs, in their faculty of comprehension. This lower material region is alone real to them, and they most decidedly deny that there is any other beyond it. That word of the Lord, Matt. vi. 22 f., is applicable to them: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*" That there is thus in their self-deception an element of ignorance, we by no means deny. On the contrary, it follows from their whole state that their ignorance must be constantly increasing. The spirit of the time has also a great share in their aberration. They deceive themselves, and submit to be deceived.

#### § 44.

In individuals of a higher spiritual endowment, the morality of sin may appear with an impression of cleverness and geniality; and in more stirring times it occurs that it extends over great masses of people like a kind of enthusiasm and fanaticism. It is then loudly proclaimed as a new gospel, of which the kernel is the *emancipation of the flesh*. This is inseparable from the emancipation of the proud ego, which, even when it declares itself a mere natural product, cannot

deny its false spirituality, and therefore eagerly boasts of the progress of our race and the immense advance which it will yet make in future, if once Christianity and all connected with it were swept from the world. Yea, from the overthrow of existing, of course long antiquated ordinances, there is promised to the human race a new golden age. The adherents of this gospel of the flesh often appear in a state that may be designated enthusiasm for falsehood, for the powerful errors by which they are inspired. We may here refer to an earlier section of this work, which treats of the antinomian systems especially of Carpocrates and Epiphanes.<sup>1</sup>

In opposition to these fanatics, there is a far larger number of people who quite quietly, and without attracting the least attention by their views of life and principles, and while observing the traditional ordinances of society, live their life in *worldly prudence*, after the morality of sin. The state in which they live is, as the opposite of all fanaticism, *indifferentism*, entire indifference to religion as well as morality, — a state, however, that is not less dangerous than that of fanaticism.

#### § 45.

Where indifference has become prevalent in an age, or has become widespread, scepticism has always preceded it. Men have said good-bye to faith, and at the same time have already seen so many philosophic systems, which, as eloquent witnesses of the uncertainty of all human views, only presented the spectacle of mutual conflict and disunion. They have also seen so many political systems, succeeding each other, without any result being produced by the change. And as they would not pay heed to the voice of conscience, which constantly testifies to a moral order of the world, they have given up truth and righteousness, and adhere only to the deities of happiness and interest (utility), as alone reliable. So was it at the time when Christianity appeared in the Roman world, in which a low physical view of life had displaced the ideal and ethical, where the philosophical didactic poem of Lucretius (born 99, died 55 years before Christ), *Of the Nature of Things*, with the tendency to hold

<sup>1</sup> See *Christian Ethics*, General Part, § 127.

up nature as the only deity, was a widespread and favourite study, even with Roman ladies. Even so has it been more than once in modern history ; for example, during the period of the French Revolution, when religious and moral indifferentism often occurred along with fanaticism for self-made idols. So also very widely in our own time. When now-a-days any one falls into indifferentism, it is undeniable that the prevailing time-spirit comes mightily to his help in this, and gives him the word. But, on the other hand, there are in our time many other testimonies and voices that have reached his ear, which he must reject. And only when he has closed eye and ear for these reminders, can he get into such a state of moral obtuseness that the higher life of the spirit is extinguished. He is now secured against all spiritual powers, for morally and spiritually he is on the Dead Sea.

The gospel history puts before our eyes a type of indifferentism in Pilate, with his question, "What is truth?" (John xviii. 38). He was done himself with this question long ago, which he utters with the completest indifference. Everything supersensuous he holds as mere fanaticism. He knows that the real truth is only the Roman Empire, with its now reigning emperor; then official business, circumstances, relations. We have another type in the rich man in the gospel (Luke xvi. 19). He suggests to us the party of the Sadducees, who denied that there is a spirit, a resurrection, and angels, and in consequence of this denial, promoted an Epicurean mode of thought and feeling among their people. He seems attached to those then widespread doctrines. Not as if he had precisely philosophized; yet he has appropriated the results, and has thereby fallen more and more a prey to indifferentism. He has taken no notice of "Moses and the prophets," but regards them as antiquated. The testimony of Scripture for the supernatural world, for the future judgment, and a coming reckoning, he regards as something for which "sufficient proof is lacking," and which has long become an overcome standpoint, and is transcended by all that was then called enlightenment and education, progress of culture, and the modern view of the world. He has not for the rest entered upon closer investigations, as all these things are far

too uninteresting to him. Standing on such a basis, he lived then—and in this he has become a type of countless numbers in our age—every day splendidly and in joy, till he died and was buried. A third type is given us in the discourses of the Lord on the last times, when it shall be as in the days of Noah: “They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away.” “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Matt. xxiv. 37 ff.; Luke xvii. 28 ff.). The form of sinfulness here manifestly emphasized by the Lord is indifferentism, indifference to higher and holy things, combined with devotion to objects of earthly culture and earthly enjoyment. “Conformed to this world” (Rom. xii. 2), they live on in full security, till suddenly judgment breaks in upon them. And as with the rich man who despised Moses and the prophets, their security rests on their special depreciation of the testimony of the truth. They would not hear Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness. They vexed just Lot (2 Pet. ii. 5-7). Even so in our time great multitudes live in the self-deception that they need not regard the testimony of Christ and the apostles, and that they are sufficiently guaranteed, by the splendid progress of culture and civilisation, against God and the world of spirit, and the nearer and nearer approaching judgment.

#### § 46.

As indifferentism in itself is spiritless and wearisome, individuals who had given themselves to it indeed, but for the rest belong to the more spiritually gifted, are very apt to escape from the tedium by seeking to give to indifferentism an element of spirit. This may be done by raising oneself above the world and life in an all-comprehensive unbounded *irony*, a play of wit which lowers and levels all things sacred and profane, good and bad, high and low, and seeks to find its satisfaction and rest in the reduction of all things to nothing, or *Nihilism*. And that is a mental tendency in which



one may be greatly strengthened by the study of those poetic and æsthetic authors (and our age has plenty of them) whose characteristic sign it is that they take nothing in earnest, want nothing, and strive to deny all reality in life, down to piquant wit and æsthetic enjoyment—"Clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars" (Jude, vers. 12, 13). Their books are properly amusing reading for indifferentists, for men to whom morality and religion are indifferent, but who require pastime and redemption from tedium, who therefore willingly take a hint how they can enjoy their own self, while hovering ironically over all that exists. Indifferentism may also obtain a mixture of spirit by combining irony with a pessimistic pathos, a tincture of world-pain, which constantly complains that nothing affords satisfaction, while, however, the man may find himself interesting, and enjoys his own imagined greatness and superiority, to which nothing whatever is right and as one would wish.

True, a higher standpoint has here been occupied than is occupied by simple prosaic indifferentism, but yet also a higher step of sinfulness. If one still, forced by the power of circumstances, somewhat respects in life what is moral, far above which he sets himself in judgment and discourse, there is always a pride at the bottom of this ironical nihilism which dares to ply its mockery of God and the world, and does not spare the holiest when there is an opportunity for a jest, which pride may be designated insolence, and which on due occasion changes to hatred of what is good and holy, especially of Christianity. In writings of the tendency here designated, there are sometimes found passages which testify a glowing enmity to what is holy, sporadically flaming up sparks from hell.

*Hypocrisy.*

§ 47.

The deeper a man enters into the morality of sin, the more does he grow into the kingdom of falsehood. A new and

wider step in this kingdom is *hypocrisy*, where a man is entangled not only in self-deception and its illusions, but also deliberately lies and masks himself to others, in order to deceive them. We speak here of hypocrisy as a state (a *habitus*), as essentially determinative for the whole way and manner of the existence of an individual. Partial hypocrisy is already present in the previous steps. Each one who follows egoistic objects will soon discover, that is, that the order of the world, as well as social order, is opposed to caprice. Although in his heart the egoistic character separates himself from the community, and in a bad sense goes his own way, yet he needs society, and cannot dispense with the friendly hand and help of other men. He certainly dare not reckon on men humouring bare egoism. Goodness is a power dominating them so much, that even he cannot find entrance to them except under the appearance of goodness. He thus uses the good, the holy, as mere masks, in order under this disguise to accomplish his objects. Hypocrisy occurs in all the relations of life,—in the intercourse of love between man and woman, when the seducer swears his false oath; in the intercourse between man and man, when friendship is feigned; in the political sphere, when tyrants as well as men of freedom pretend a deep care for fatherland and human welfare, and thereby lead men according to their designs, as also much hypocrisy occurs in diplomacy; in art and science, when a pure unselfish love to the higher idea is pretended, while yet the applause of the multitude is alone pursued, incense is offered to the idols of the time-spirit, and the bad inclinations of others are flattered, as well as one's own, opposed to truth, religion, and morality; in the religious sphere, when the mask of the saint is taken to attain worldly advantages and the satisfaction of the lusts, or in order "to be seen by men," "to appear to them" (Matt. vi. 5, 16). Partial hypocrisy is found at bottom everywhere in life; and in social intercourse people constantly deceive each other, by abusing speech in order mutually to flatter their vanity, although quite conscious of the inner untruth and emptiness. Wherever mere phrases occur, that is, words without corresponding truth within man, there is hypocrisy.

Still the men are always but few who go so far as to make

hypocrisy their personal form of existence, or the fundamental feature of their character,—those, namely, who consciously have given themselves to falsehood, and who, to accomplish their egoistic objects, must always go masked. Their whole life is, so to say, a single great “need-lie.” For if they would gain the goal they have once set before them, they cannot but lie. Hypocrisy leads down into the depths of wickedness in the measure that it is developed to virtuosity. It forms a chief element of the demoniac state. There is no completely bad character that is not likewise a hypocrite, apart from what in the kingdom of evil he may otherwise represent. Shakespeare has a clear view of this. The tyrant Richard III. is a master in hypocrisy. Macbeth does not appear a hypocrite from the beginning; but the deeper he sinks into sin and the deceitfulness of sin, the deeper also he sinks in hypocrisy. Lady Macbeth, from the moment that the evil purpose is formed, gives her spouse the counsel to dissemble, and clothes herself in the garment of hypocrisy:

“To beguile the time,  
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under’t.”

*Macbeth*, I. 5.

Hypocrisy hides in its bosom a deep cowardice, which is characteristic of the essence of evil. Evil does not dare to be *itself*, to confess itself to itself, but must walk in the stolen clothes of goodness, and hereby pays an involuntary acknowledgment to goodness. On the other hand, there lurks in hypocrisy a monstrous pride, a most outrageous audacity. For indeed the audacity is outrageous that would make its own caprice lord and master of the holy, to lower what ought to be the object of man’s deepest reverence to a hollow mask; and in the same sense it is audacious to use other men as mere means and tools of an egoism, to deny social duty towards them, in withholding from them their fundamental right to truth (Eph. iv. 25), and in withholding oneself from being known to them. This audacity may assume a demoniac character, while individuals who have become familiar with this mask-play may even find pleasure in the deception itself and the mere lie, even without regard to the question whether

it yields them anything. If we said above that the existence of the hypocrite is a great need-lie, we must now limit this statement by saying that there are some who lie not only from need, but from pleasure. There are men who find pleasure in lying, in disguising themselves in the eyes of others, in intriguing for intrigue's sake, only to have the satisfaction of leading others astray, of surrounding them with a web, in which they may be caught and confused, while the egoistic self secretly enjoys itself and the experimental play that it makes with them. Yet we will not conceal that the pleasure of masking oneself, and thereby leading others astray, may also occur in individuals whom we can by no means designate as turned from the ethical, but who are earnest, close natures, that are internally busied with themselves and their future plans, and do not wish to be manifest to others before the time. But such close natures have need to take good care of themselves, and to watch the boundary, lest, while practising a mask-play, supposed to be allowable, they at last imperceptibly get drawn in with their psychological and other experiments to demoniac and pernicious masquerades.

In order that the accomplished hypocrite, who uses all things as means for his egoism, may in some measure preserve rest and security (*securitas*) within him, he needs a *nihilistic* view of life. He must incessantly exercise himself in the self-deception that all in this world is illusion, that truth is a chimera, that duty and conscience, responsibility and accountability, God and immortality, are mere imaginations and prejudices; with which he must likewise practise *contempt of men*, who are worth nothing better than to be deceived, as, in short, the world wants to be deceived (*mundus vult decipi, decipiatur igitur*). Yet no hypocrite will succeed in attaining full security in this view of his. Reality will disturb him therein, by showing him, amid the conflicts of life, that the good in which he will not believe is yet a reality, a power that inexorably combats evil, makes a revelation of it through the illumination of truth, and rebukes it; that there is still a rock here on which wickedness and the lie must ever be stranded anew. Through being persuaded of this resistance, that affected contempt of good is changed into *hatred*. One despises what is empty and vain, but hates only that to which

reality is attributed. By this means egoism is confirmed still more deeply in itself. The character becomes more and more hardened, and aims at combating and annihilating the good.

*Obduracy and Devilish Egoism. Hatred of Good.—Hatred of Christ.—Sin against the Holy Spirit.*

### § 48.

Obduracy, which may already partially take place in the preceding stages, is the state in which receptivity for the good is extinguished, in which one "with seeing eyes sees not, with hearing ears hears not, and understands not with the heart" (Isa. vi. 10); a full insusceptibility, in which one, void of all (moral) feeling (*ἀπηληγηκότες*, Eph. iv. 19), is dead to every higher and nobler care, to every better motion, and so in a moral sense is become like a corpse.<sup>1</sup> Yet this is only the passive side of the obduracy. The active side is the egoistic self-assertion, which is brought to its highest point when, with entire insensibility for the good, for all that is higher, egoism will have only itself, not for any advantage, but for its own sake (in order to assert itself), when the only endeavour is to make evil and the kingdom of evil dominant; on the other hand, to destroy good and the kingdom of the good. Although egoism will reason away the power of good, yet it cannot dispense with this power as its opposite, but only exists by it. It cannot, like good, rest in itself; it can make and fashion nothing. It is a never-satisfied hunger, which seeks its satisfaction in hatred and enmity of good, in the overthrow and destruction of all living (of natural good). This utmost development and last form of egoism is *devilish*. For the devil would, in the lie of pride, make himself God; but can only do this by raging in his hatred against the one true God, in order to destroy His kingdom and dominion.

Now, the question may no doubt be asked, Whether this entire obduracy towards God, this devilish egoism, can occur among men at all? whether we have not merely, so to say, pointed to an imaginary perfect image, an ideal of wickedness, but to

<sup>1</sup> Compare Sailer, *Christl. Moral*, I. 275.



which the reality always but imperfectly corresponds? In a certain sense we allow this. For the apostle speaks indeed of "the Man of sin, the Opponent who shall be revealed in the last time, and sit in the temple of God, and give himself out as God" (1 Thess. ii. 3, 4). But so long as we are in this age, and the opposition between good and evil is not ripened, so long can perfect wickedness be only sporadically and approximately realized among men. In principle, however, the last stage of evil may be occupied even in this world, in so far as men may place themselves in the service of the devilish principle; wherefore the Holy Scripture speaks also of men who are "children of the devil" (John viii. 44, compare 1 John iii. 8). And although wickedness can only then be fully unfolded when such men have passed from this world of sense into the proper world of spirits, yet experience abundantly shows us the presence of the devilish principle among us also, shows us manifestations of wickedness in which a demoniac energy is expressed, that unmistakably testifies of a connection with the demoniac kingdom. That there is in the world of men an actual hatred, an enmity against good, as well against the morally as against the physically good, the living, is shown in that "pleasure in unrighteousness" which is not rare (1 Cor. xiii. 6); is shown in the frequently occurring envy, malice, cruelty, that finds pleasure in torturing other men with the most exquisite pains, bodily or mental; is shown in a pleasure in destruction and annihilation, which may appear as frantic mania, as in the Roman emperors, in a Nero or a Caligula, who wished that all the heads of the Roman people had had but one neck, that he might at one stroke cut them all off together.<sup>1</sup>

But hatred and enmity against good is at the very bottom *hatred of the Good One*. For, like love, hatred ever applies itself to persons. And who can deny that there is a hatred, an enmity to God, in which the man with passionate fury would tear asunder the bonds that bind him to God (Ps. ii. 3), would tear himself free and cast away his dependence on God, of which in his inmost being he is yet conscious; and now mocks the thought of God as a foolish imagination, now, feeling the reality of it, utters blasphemies against Him, from

<sup>1</sup> J. Müller, *die christliche Lehre von der Sünde*, I. 233.

whose holiness and omnipotence he cannot escape? In the Scripture it is said, "The devils believe and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19). So there are men who believe indeed, but only in this sense, that they have an involuntary certainty, internally forced upon them, of the reality of the God-consciousness, but who tremble at it, and seek by blasphemies to allay this trembling. In our days such blasphemies have often been heard in democratic assemblies, at revolutionary congresses, and they may also be read in writings that are intended to stir up the multitude.

Hatred of God is combined, however, with hatred of men, especially of those who believe on Him and would serve Him, and who have declared war with unbelief. Especially we may here recall the hatred of the clergy, the ministers of religion, as it finds expression on certain occasions. True, one must guard—as need hardly be mentioned—against indiscriminately confounding hatred of priests and preachers with hatred of religion itself. On the other hand, it is by no means superfluous to remark, that hatred of priests in very many cases is the simple outflow of enmity to religion. Statements like this, that the last king must be hanged with the entrails of the last priest, testify of a hatred that indicates far more than a mere hatred of a certain class of men.

Above all, however, we must direct attention to the *hatred of Christ*, that is, to that form of enmity to God which is directed against the central point of the revelation of God's love, and which we therefore may call the central enmity to God. Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world with this testimony, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9), stands as the living witness of the holiness and love of God, of the God-consciousness, of the reality of sin and of grace. The great fact of the appearance of Christ is the practical proof of the being and government of the living God among us men, and speaks more loudly and powerfully than all reasonings. If one, then, would get rid of God, one must first of all get rid of Christ. He is the One with whom the worldly mind especially takes offence. And even so must the men who believe on and confess Christ be banished from the world, as they are the living personal witnesses of communion with God. The persecution of Christians is inseparable from

the hatred of Christ, whether it be executed with fire and sword, or with words, with the arrows of mockery and scorn.

§ 49.

The hatred of Christ has, however, this peculiarity, that it does not necessarily presuppose a general enmity to God and a vicious life, but that it may also be developed from a certain standpoint of human virtue and righteousness. We recall the Apostle Paul, who, before his conversion, as Saul hated Christ and persecuted the Christians, and yet with all this was still leading a pious and righteous life according to the law. Hatred of Christ, that is, is always developed from the offence that is taken at the appearance of Christ. But that offence springs from man's natural heart, and does not by any means merely occur in such as are "sinners before others;" but also, and that with a peculiar colouring, in such as pursue their own ideals of virtue, and in secure repose of soul depend on their own virtue and righteousness. Herein consists the danger of the offence, that by it in itself, even without passing through other ways and regions of sin, a man may by a few steps fall into regions of evil closely connected with the demoniac kingdom; nay, may fall into a sin which, if consistently carried through, must at last end as *the* sin for which there is no forgiveness. In this sense it may be said to be dangerous for a man to come into contact with Christ, into a closer relation to Him. For, by entering into a relation with Christ, we are brought into the central and direct relation to God, which may become not only "for our rising again," for raising, but also "for our fall" and destruction (Luke ii. 34). In this one relation, namely, that to the Redeemer, to redemption and the forgiveness of sins, the difference vanishes between those who are "sinners above others," and those who are sinners in general; between the unrighteous and the relatively righteous. In this relation only the one question avails, whether one will accept the forgiveness of sins which all need, or will despise it, and thereby place himself in a relation of direct enmity, direct defiance to God, and contract a guilt that is the heavier the more it is developed into conscious hatred, to scorn and mockery of the divine grace.

Sooner or later a turning-point must occur in every man's life, when he is placed face to face with Christ, and must make his choice. And here what we said above is confirmed, that as sin in the history of our race has originated within the religious sphere, it must also end in the same sphere, as well for the race as for the individual.

### § 50.

Offence is the umbrage that the human heart in its natural (unconverted) state takes at the appearance of Christ, at the testimony that He bears of Himself, and that His disciples bear to Him; at the requirement that He makes of man, and which amounts to conversion, faith, and holiness. By nature our heart finds all this in contradiction to its own conceptions of God and man, and is thereby provoked. But although the understanding is offended at the gospel, yet it is essentially *the will* to which it is offensive. It is human pride that feels itself humbled by the appearance and entire revelation of Christ, and will not have this humiliation. The more urgently the gospel, and the gospel testimony, directs its requirements to man, and the longer the pride of man resists it, the more does the offence that has been taken pass over into hatred. One wishes to rid the world of this form, a form which constantly crosses the path of human virtue and righteousness to disturb it, and condemns so much of what one would insist upon and maintain. One becomes more and more conscious of this, that if He is the truth, then there is an end of all *our* wisdom, and we are walking in ways from which we must turn, which we must leave. Thus one is set fast in this temper: we *will* not have it so; we will not have this Man to reign over us. It is then sought to bring it about that Christ is anew accused and crucified. All arts are sought to invalidate Christ's own testimony and that of His disciples, to tear the crown of divinity from His head, to deny His sinlessness and holiness; His royal dignity is mocked, His utterance is scorned that all power is given to Him in heaven and on earth. In this respect it is interesting in our days to hear from the mouths of the enemies of Christ the assurance that Christianity has long since ceased to be a power in history

and in life, it has long belonged to the things that are done away, and there is no longer any one who really and uprightly believes in Christ; faith in Christ is an overcome standpoint, given over to forgetfulness. According to this, one would expect them to speak of this dead thing with all quietness and indifference; nay, that they would hardly find it worth while to speak of it at all. But the anger and passionate heat, the suppressed bitterness with which these assurances are again and again brought forward, without these people growing weary of the repetition, clearly betrays that He who forms the object of their hatred is no dead one, but a living one; that hatred of Christ is inseparably connected with *fear of Christ*, the secret fear of the risen, truly living Christ, present in the midst of us.

### § 51.

Where hatred of Christ is developed to its utmost point, it becomes the sin against the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees had been witnesses of one of the miracles of the Lord, and thereupon they declared in their hatred, "this fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. xii. 24). They accuse the Holy One, whom God had sent into the world, of standing in league with the devil. Then Christ spoke the solemn, weighty words: "All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven to men. And whosoever shall speak against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

We are not to understand this utterance of the Lord as if the sin against the Holy Spirit were something in its essence entirely different from the sin against Christ. The sin against the Holy Spirit is always sin against Christ also; for the wish of the Holy Spirit is nothing else than to glorify Christ, and He never speaks of His own, but takes all from Christ (John xvi. 14 f.). But the difference consists in this, that there is a hatred, an enmity against Christ, which is more or less without the right knowledge of Christ, an enmity which



has such an element of ignorance that that word of the Lord may be applied, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34), are not conscious in what degree, how frightfully they sin. Such hatred of Christ, and the mockery or blasphemy springing from it, must be had in view when the Saviour says, "Whosoever speaketh against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him" (of course on condition of repentance and believing conversion). Where, again, the Spirit has so glorified Christ that His truth and righteousness have appeared to the heart of the man, who yet, internally resisting, hears this testimony that he has within himself, and still mocks and blasphemes, that is the sin against the Holy Spirit. And this sin cannot be forgiven, because the man thereby thrusts from within him the sin-forgiving grace itself and salvation, and substitutes blasphemy for it. In the sin against the Holy Spirit, then, the man does not merely deny an external fact,—as long as anything is merely external and strange to one, it may still be doubted,—but an internal fact, denies the inmost and holiest truth of his own consciousness. He tells himself and others the lie that the gospel of Christ is a false gospel; and he yields himself to believe this his own lie—despite the clear testimony of the Spirit in his conscience and heart.

This sin can only be committed by men who have come into such a relation to Christ, as to be internally touched and laid hold of by the effects of the divine holiness and grace. And whether we are to regard the word that Christ spoke, owing to the bold scorn of the Pharisees, as a warning against the sin which they were in the utmost danger of committing, or as a direct accusation against those that had committed it, that word equally assumes that the Pharisees to whom it was spoken had received through the operations of the Spirit an impression of the truth and holiness in Christ, nay, a knowledge of Christ, which they resisted from a wicked disposition, and wantonly opposed. By the sin against the Holy Spirit we must, then, specially understand men who have entered into a relation of discipleship to Christ, which, however, is not yet sufficiently confirmed to exclude the possibility of falling away. Such men the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has in view when he writes, chap. vi. 4-6: "It is

impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

### § 52.

One cannot then imagine the sin against the Holy Spirit without a falling away from Christ, whether the man was already an actual disciple, or occupied a preparatory stage of awakening and enlightenment. But every fall from Christ is not a sin against the Holy Spirit. To know whether a man has been guilty of falling away from Christ, in the sense of committing the sin that cannot be forgiven, it will be needful to know how far the falling away was internal and conscious; but this can only be perfectly known by the Searcher of hearts.

In order to show how various in kind may be the falling away from Christ, we will mention the instance of a notorious fall, which yet can by no means be viewed as sin against the Holy Spirit. We mean the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate. In the sense of a spiritual and internal act, he certainly never fell away from Christ, for he never consciously belonged to Christ. True, he was baptized and confessed Christ; he also read the Scriptures of the New Testament, which he sought to answer. But from the history of that time it unmistakably appears that the Spirit had made nothing of all that clear to him, at least not in such a way as that he had ever gained a clear understanding, or even merely a deeper presentiment, of the truth. In his youth, compelled, by relations in whom he must have seen political opponents, to perform a service in the Christian Church (as reader of the Holy Scriptures), the imperial prince remained enthusiastically devoted to heathenism, its wise men and poets. Christianity was only presented to him in caricature. He saw in Christian worship only an empty ceremonial service; and even so he could only see in the theological disputations of those days a hair-splitting worship of the letter, which seemed to him

disgusting and ridiculous. It must also have repelled him to see Christianity in the service of cunning politics, and men who were the most zealous representatives of orthodoxy defile themselves with hypocrisy and the coarsest immorality. But to distinguish here between caricature and ideal, between the abuse and the thing itself, between the degenerate and the original, was not given him by the Spirit. According to the picture of him presented to us by history, he cannot have sinned against the Holy Spirit by his falling away from the Church. What has made his name famous, is his bold imperial thought to combat Christianity and to revive heathenism. This his struggle for heathen ideals of life and humanity has made him so worthy to many adherents of a heathenish humanity in our own day, to people who see in Julian a spiritual greatness, but know the essence of Christianity just as little as he did, and therefore think to combat it, while they only fight against a shadow, a caricature, which is all they know of it; although we are very far from denying that many combat something else, and more than a mere caricature. In his struggle, that word of the poet was fulfilled in him :

“ It is a vain and empty venture  
To fall against the wheel of time ;”

and this is the tragical part in his fate. The last word assigned to him, “ Thou hast conquered, Galilean !” —and that this, if not his last word, was at least his last thought, can hardly be doubted,—tells only of his consciousness of Christianity as an external historical power, which had for and with it the stream of time. But not the slightest trace would lead us to think that the inner essence of this power, against which he became more and more embittered, and which he no doubt hated, had ever appeared to him, or that *in his own heart* there had ever occurred a struggle between heathenism and Christianity. To the last moment he remained *bonâ fide* a heathen, and is said during the last night of his life, with Greek philosophers, in great composure, to have made observations of heathen wisdom on the elevation and immortality of the human soul. If in the Church, with a certain shudder, mention is often made of a Julian apostasy, and a Julian enmity against Christianity; this Julian enmity takes

its place indeed in the history of human sin, and human errors; but a high pneumatical importance cannot be assigned to it. To quote Heb. vi. 4 ff. against Julian, is altogether unwarrantable.

The Julian apostasy is the type of the merely external apostasy, an apostasy from an outward confessional relation to Christ, the type of an enmity to Christ which in several respects is to be attributed to ignorance, and to *lack of the light of the Spirit*, without regarding it as therefore not to be imputed. It has often recurred under other forms; and it may be asked whether, in the attacks of a Voltaire and kindred spirits against Christianity, which they mainly knew only as a caricature, much does not belong to the Julian category?

If we seek, again, a type for internal apostasy, we do best to follow the Scripture, which shows us in the circle of the most intimate disciples a Judas Iscariot. That Judas had received a deep impression of the holiness of Christ cannot be doubted, and appears at last in the confession which he makes after his crime: "I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. xxvii. 4). As one whom Christ Himself had chosen ("Have not I chosen you twelve?" John vi. 70), he must have made a good beginning. But as he loved the darkness rather than the light, filled imagination and heart more and more with the ideal of an earthly Messiah, who should procure his disciples worldly honour and glory, while Christ constantly showed them a Saviour who was not of this world; as his life with the Lord and that whole circle, the longer it was continued, became the more burdensome to him, while he felt himself in his heart judged and rebuked; he conceived a hatred to Christ, yet so that he yielded at once to hypocrisy and sin, and he committed his evil deed. It has been disputed whether this apostasy, this betrayal of Judas, can be called sin against the Holy Spirit. The Scripture gives us no express answer to this question. As an extenuating circumstance, it may indeed be urged that, when Judas committed this sin, the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given," we read in John vii. 39, "for Jesus was not yet glorified." But, on the other hand, we may mention that preparatory enlightenment is to be

regarded as preceding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the Lord Himself says of Judas, "It were good for that man if he had never been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24), a word in which, at any rate, this dreadful meaning seems to lie, that for his sin there was no forgiveness.

Among those who have accused themselves of the sin against the Holy Spirit, we instance from the history of the Church the well-known example of Francesco Spiera. Spiera, who lived at the time of the Reformation (he died 1548), was a talented Italian jurist, who enthusiastically exchanged the Popish for the evangelical religion, of which he bore witness as one awakened to a living faith. On worldly grounds, and in contradiction to his clear conviction, he afterwards fell away from the evangelical faith, which he publicly abjured. He accused himself of having committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, because the inner voice of the Spirit had most strongly warned him from this apostasy, and he had nevertheless defiantly resisted. He despaired, would accept no comfort, but constantly complained, "God is mine enemy," and died a frightful death, in unutterable anguish of conscience. The idea that he had really committed the sin of which he accused himself may find confirmation in this, that in his life-history, unhappily after as well as before his awakening, there are found many traces of bad tricks of advocacy, of hypocrisy and lying. On the other hand, in extenuation of the judgment on him, one may bear in mind that his terrible unfaithfulness never seems to have been hatred to God and Christ, although at times in his mania he exclaimed, "I hate God, for I know that He will not have mercy upon me." Without exalting ourselves as judges over him, we add only the general remark: Because any one accuses himself of having committed this sin, it by no means follows that he has committed it. It often recurs in the history of temptations, that men accuse themselves of this sin, while the sincere pain, the dread of the sin, the eager longing for God's forgiving grace, for communion with God, that they express, testify that they have not committed it. This sin is not committed by a man, in levity and self-forgetfulness, uttering a doubtless very bad and blasphemous word; or by any one, from weakness, denying his Lord, denying recognised truth or his own conviction, as



Peter denied them. It consists rather in an internal perversion in the attitude of the heart to God and the truth, an inner defiance, a conscious yielding to the spirit of lies, not merely a partial, but so central a yielding as to involve a permanent enmity to God, and with this a permanent insusceptibility for the forgiveness of sins. We are not, indeed, in the present state in a position in any way to assign sure criteria for this permanency. But so long as truth and uprightness are still in a man's heart, so long as he not only trembles before the holy and almighty God whom he has offended, but also feels in the depth of his heart a longing for God's mercy and His sin-forgiving love, he has not committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. But in this there certainly lies for all of us the earnest requirement to pray: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24).

The awful manifestations of sin considered above only attain their full development in the kingdom of darkness beyond the grave. The assurance of unbelief that no such kingdom exists, is destitute of meaning for any one who has already seen here on earth the working of the power of darkness and of the demoniac kingdom. On the contrary, we acknowledge that there are depths of wickedness that we cannot conceive, and which are not meant to be objects of our conception in this life. The practical side of the matter is, that we must recognise the destructive power against which we have to contend, the abyss against which we have to be on our guard.<sup>1</sup>

If we have above attempted to show a progression in the development of sin, we by no means overlook the fact that

<sup>1</sup> As a warning against a perverted endeavour theoretically to conceive the kingdom of darkness, and to look through it, Franz Baader quotes from Schiller's ballad, *The Diver*, the well-known strophe, which he applies to the mysteries of wickedness and of hell:

"Let him rejoice  
That breathes here in the rosy light;  
*But down there under it is frightful;*  
And let not mortal tempt the gods,  
And never, no never, desire to see  
What they cover in grace with night and horror."

life, history, poetry exhibit before us, besides a multiplicity of intermediate forms, an infinitude of combinations and crossings of different elements of evil, which cannot be brought under general categories, whose development rather belongs to individual contemplation, entering into personal relations. Our object was only to point out the chief ways, whose last issue is destruction.

IMPUTATION AND GUILT.—PUNITIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

§ 53.

By sin man becomes guilty; for his sin is imputed to him, that is, brought back to himself as the free cause thereof. God is not the cause of sin, nor a blind fate; and when the poet says of "the heavenly powers" that "they bring us into life, let the poor man become guilty, and then leave him to his pain," that is simply fiction, and *not* truth. It lies in the conception of guilt, that sin has proceeded from the man's own will, and that the man who by his sin has made a breach in God's holy world-order, has thereby become liable to an atoning punishment. And even granting that this punishment only takes place in a distant future, or in the other world, yet it hovers from the first like a threatening sword over the head of the guilty, of which even the hardened sinner has a dim presentiment. But not only are those people affected with guilt who are wont to be called sinners before others, not only such as have committed great and horrifying crimes, but we are *all* debtors, as certainly as we are all sinners, wherefore we have all to pray in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our debts." Yet it may be said that, on the whole, there is far more consciousness of sin in men than consciousness of guilt, because men do not distinguish between sin and guilt. Many men think that, could they only become free from sin, reform, and cast their sins behind them as into an abyss, all would be in order. This is, however, a great error. Even if the sin may be regarded as past and gone, guilt yet remains as an ever-present requirement, as an unpaid debt cleaving to him who has sinned. It is by no means sufficient

for a man to reform, even if he could; a satisfaction must be rendered for the fault and crime of the past. Goethe was wont, when he had freed himself from this or that passion, this or that perverted tendency of spirit, to represent it in a poetic work, and thereby entirely to free himself internally from it. Much-admired poetic creations have thus, it is true, originated; but ethically it must be declared that the matter itself was hereby by no means adjusted. For the guilt which a man has contracted in such circumstances of passion, for instance, by unfaithfulness in this or that love-affair, is certainly not got rid of by freeing oneself from, and rising above the passion, by glorifying the whole for his own soul as a fancy picture, and now looking back like a convalescent on the sickness he has endured. In an æsthetic point of view, indeed, the practice of Goethe cannot be imitated by others who cannot reproduce their circumstances in poetic works like him. But in an ethical point of view it is very common, and is followed by many, who consider that the only important thing is to turn one's back on sin, and leave it behind one, to look back upon it as a finished, past affair, without thinking further on the guilt, the unsettled debt. True, men are much disposed to forgive themselves this guilt, or to let their good friends forgive them. But, in truth, God alone can forgive it, and He forgives it only on the condition that He Himself has established in the gospel.

## § 54.

What is imputed to a man is not merely the single action, but the whole moral state in which he is. For it is by his own will that each one makes himself what he becomes. One may indeed inquire whether there is not something in the moral state of every man that may be regarded as fate, whether the inborn sinfulness, the influence of environment, of education, do not justify this point of view, for instance, when children in early years are bred by their own parents to wickedness and sin. We in no way call in question the justice of this view. The Searcher of hearts will know to distinguish in the judgment between what in the sinful state of a man is his fate, and what is his guilt. But we must

most strongly maintain that what we call fate has a side on which it entirely falls under personal imputation. Fate is constantly transmuted into personal guilt, so far as a man appropriates and voluntarily continues the evil that has come upon him from without and pressed into him. Man is will; God's holy law is the proper law of the human will; and man cannot avoid judging himself and submitting to be judged by this law.

It is a not unusual error, that only intended, self-conscious sin is imputed to a man. The circumstance that a sin is committed in ignorance may indeed mitigate the judgment upon it. But if ignorance ought to set me free from all imputation, the obligation of the law for me must depend merely on my accidental and changing knowledge of the law. But the law is the law of my being, whether I know of it in particular cases or not, and each of my volitions is subjected to its judgment. Through ignorance and unconsciousness a thing may indeed appear as innocent. But if unconscious sin comes to light, it is not only recognised as sin, but also imputed. And in the ignorance itself, when viewed in connection with the character, there is also guiltiness, a neglect, a not-hearing of the voice of conscience. In the contest which was waged in the seventeenth century, and beyond it, between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, this point came to be fully handled. The Jesuits define sin as a voluntary (conscious) transgression of the Divine commandment. The less consciousness of sin, the less imputation. The more he sins in anger, in passion, in states where a man is not his own master, the more claim has he to be freed from imputation. The less I think on God while committing a great sin, the less I transgress His commandment; the less I was disturbed by a scruple of conscience in committing a sin, the more easily can I be absolved; whereas I am more deserving of punishment if I had scruple and misgiving in the commission. The sophistry with which the single action was here torn asunder from the whole preceding course of actions, and which was applied to absolve from the most audacious sins, found its just castigation in Pascal's *Provincial Letters* (the fourth). That ignorance does not do away responsibility, is seen in the prayer of the Lord for His enemies: "Father, *forgive* them:

they know not what they do" (know not in what degree, how frightfully they sin). Ignorance is here indeed regarded as an extenuation; but if it could do away the guilt, it would surely be superfluous to pray for forgiveness. Christ also says expressly, "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke xii. 47 f.). Here again it is expressly said that he who sins in ignorance shall be punished, although in a smaller degree than he who consciously sins. Various degrees of responsibility are recognised in the Holy Scriptures throughout. "It shall be *more tolerable* for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for this generation" (Matt. xi. 22, 24; Luke xi. 32, the men of Nineveh). For in Christ's days the strongest motives were presented to men, the purest knowledge of the truth, of which earlier generations were not partakers. Only degrees of responsibility by no means exclude, they rather presuppose that sins of ignorance are also imputed. The Apostle Paul says of himself, that he persecuted the Church of Christ "ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 14); nevertheless he accuses himself as the chief (greatest) of sinners (ver. 15). The history of missions bears witness to the psychological fact that savage peoples who were sunk in the vilest superstition, in which they had yielded themselves to all impurity, to an unnatural cruelty and lust, as soon as the light of the gospel shines upon them, by no means feel themselves excused through their deep ignorance, but accuse themselves in sorrowful repentance.

### § 55.

Where there is unatoned sin and guilt, the punitive justice of God must also be revealed. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18). Punishment is the reaction of righteousness against sin, the retribution that comes upon the sinner's head, gives him to eat the fruit of his doings, and thereby maintains the moral order of the world, disturbed by sin, and gives effect to it. A con-



ception of punishment that sets forth its object as exclusively the reformation of the sinner, springs from a weak humanity, that exalts goodness and grace at the expense of righteousness. The proper conception of punishment is retribution, that "judgment shall return to righteousness (Ps. xciv. 15), the law be maintained (Ps. cxl. 7, 8), and man may reap what he has sowed" (Gal. vi. 7). That regard to reformation does not *necessarily* belong to the conception of punishment, but is only an additional element, so far as punishment is admitted into the teleology (the final cause) of grace, is clearly seen from the discourses of the Lord concerning the last judgment, where the damned are banished into the outer darkness. Here there is no mention of reformation, but only of retribution. But so long as the time of grace lasts, so long as a man, even outside the region of redemption, is an object of the educative providence of God, one may no doubt discover a pedagogic element in punishment, in which reforming grace makes itself manifest. In the stricter meaning of the word, however, no punishment can reform man; at the best it can only exert a preparatory influence, to induce the man to *seek* reformation, to lay hold of the gospel, which alone can bestow the power for thorough reformation and renewal of the man. Only in the region of redemption, only for those who are become God's children, punishment is transformed into paternal discipline (*παιδεία*) and trial.

It may indeed be said that the sinner carries his punishment in himself, in the unrest, the dispeace that fills his heart; that the deeper he sinks into sin, the more this word is fulfilled in him: "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 9). But righteousness must also manifest itself in the external state, in the destinies that retributively visit man, whether they immediately and directly proceed from the laws of the disturbed order of the world, or come upon him by special leadings. That this outward, actual revelation is often delayed, and in many cases is hard to be recognised as such, lies in the nature of the present life, or in this, that the last judgment is not yet come, that will clear and rectify all things. But that partial judgments can be recognised even here, not only in the history of the world and of the nations, but also in the life of families,

of individuals, can be denied by no one that believes in a righteous God. Divine reactions against human sins, now as retributive punishments, now as educative chastisements, appear often and in many ways. At one time these divine reactions reveal themselves indirectly. Hindrances are then opposed to sinful purposes and undertakings; sufferings are sent, adversities, checks in the way; one or other blessing is withdrawn from the man. At another time they reveal themselves directly, and as it were palpably, especially when a man in pride and defiance has sinned against God. Then the word is often terribly fulfilled, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." A sudden, deep humiliation is then decreed to the man, humiliations in which God the Lord makes him aware of His insulted majesty. Even the old world had a glimpse of this; and, in the Greek tragic poets, the chorus often makes observations on the punishment which the angry deity inflicts on human pride and arrogance. At times the punitive justice may appear as a divine irony, that lets the sinner attain an entirely different result, an entirely different, nay, opposite outcome of his purpose, to what he had planned. It is among the most fearful of the revelations of God's righteousness, when sin itself becomes the punishment of sin; when God gives men over to their sins (Rom. i. 26, 28), blinds their eyes and hardens their hearts, that they may not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart (John xii. 60); that the measure of their iniquity may become full, and thereupon judgment come upon them the more terribly. This revelation stands written in the history of the nations in capital letters. But it may also be read in the history of individuals, provided one can and will read such divine writing.

#### § 56.

For the infliction of punishment it is necessary that the man come to recognise it as a *deserved* punishment, that is, that he acknowledge his sin, and likewise reckon it to him as his guilt. Sooner or later this acknowledgment of sin and guilt, that is, not only of this or that sin and guilt, but of the whole sinful guilty state, will come for every man, be it in this life, at the hour of death, or in the future life. When

such a moment occurs, the man stands face to face with a great alternative. This knowledge, in which each one who has not been reconciled to his God will necessarily feel himself unworthy of communion with God, must either lead to repentance, to godly sorrow, in which he then lays hold of grace, in faith in the forgiveness of sins; or it must pass into despair, into an absolute renunciation of all hope (desperation).

Despair is the last result of sin, except an escape from this hell can be gained by means of repentance. Despair is the essence and the proper meaning of hell, wherefore the Inferno in Dante bears that inscription: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." That sin not repented of must lead to despair, is evident in those men who have made greater progress in the path of sin. The farther a man proceeds in this path, the more a secret despair moves within him.<sup>1</sup> However many false prospects and hopes the guilt-laden one may conjure up, there yet lies at the bottom of his soul a secret hopelessness, not merely regarding the event of his special egoistic efforts, but above all, a hopelessness in regard to his own person, his future. Despite all his lies and all his defiance, yet the power of God, the power of good, so asserts itself for him, that he fears the truth and reality of it, that he, this pre-supposed, feels himself overcome, rejected and excluded from the communion of God, and only staring into a starless night. In secret, we say, this despair is present; but if the moment occurs when the consciousness of guilt emerges in full clearness, it becomes manifested. In despair the sinner may yet, with the abyss of hopelessness and darkness before his eyes, abide in his defiance, in order to perish with heroism. But the history of sin shows us that even to the most defiant and

<sup>1</sup> In Sören Kierkegaard's paradoxical utterance (in his book, *The Sickness unto Death*), that all men are in a state of despair, even though they do not know it themselves, we can only acknowledge the general truth, that in every human heart, in consequence of the state of sin, there exists a germ of despair. But it may also with as good reason be said that in every human heart a germ of hope is present, and that man's hope, his hope, however indefinite, of salvation, is only fully extinguished in the extreme stages of sin and guilt. The conception of despair can, as we apprehend, only be set forth with the definiteness belonging to it, when it is fully defined in its relation to the conceptions of hope and futurity.

arrogant sinners, there yet come moments when they sink down, feel a deep horror of themselves, despond and despair. And it may perhaps be said that in hell there occurs a constant alternation, an incessant change of despair, now into *defiance*, now into *despondency* (compare Jer. xvii. 9), in single instances both together. The desponding hopelessness in which the sinner loses courage, becomes cowardly, and breaks down, must not, as one is often inclined to do, be confounded with repentance or godly sorrow (2 Cor. vii. 10). Not with a feeling of repentance, which ever includes a hope, however anxious, and a longing, but in boundless despair, in *horror of himself*, Judas declares, "I have betrayed innocent blood," and casts from him the thirty pieces of silver. That it is no godly sorrow is clearly proved by his suicide that follows. And, to take an example from another sphere, not in repentance, but in despair, King Richard III. speaks, while his fate is overtaking him, and after he had dreamed his darker dreams of conscience, which have made his heart despondent :

" My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
 And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
 And every tale condemns me for a villain.  
 Perjury, perjury in the high'st degree ;  
 Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree ;  
 All several sins, all used in each degree,  
 Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty ! Guilty !  
*I shall despair.* There is no creature loves me ;  
 And if I die, no soul shall pity me ;  
 Nay, wherefore should they, *since that I myself*  
*Find in myself no pity to myself ?*"

—SHAKESPEARE'S *Richard III.* Act v. Sc. 3.

Such sinners cannot believe in the article of the forgiveness of sins. We see, too, how, soon after this outburst of his despondency and despair, he calls himself again to defiance :

" Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls.  
*Conscience* is but a word that cowards use,  
 Devised at first to keep the strong in awe."

And in the last words that we hear from him on the battle-field, ere he vanishes from our eyes :

" A horse ! a horse ! my kingdom for a horse ! "

we hear both the terrific anguish of despair, the terror of death, in more than a merely bodily sense, and also the demoniacally raving defiance, that will not give up its cause.

## CONVERSION AND THE NEW LIFE BEGUN.

## THE NEW WAY.

## § 57.

From the power of sin and the terror of the guilty conscience, man can only be redeemed by conversion and faith. "God willeth that all men should be saved, and should come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4); and in His gospel "He commands all men everywhere to repent, and hath given assurance to all men" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). In the appointed times of His economy, He gives to all the possibility of conversion, and it is the man's own fault if this possibility, if the time of grace be lost.

Conversion is at once a turning from and a return, is a thoroughly changed direction of the will through its submission to grace, whereby a man breaks with his past, leaves the way he has hitherto gone, and enters on *a new way to righteousness*. Thus conversion is shown not merely by a man leaving the way of sin, but also in that he leaves that way of virtue in which he had hitherto gone, while he was pursuing a righteousness of the law which he was to gain for himself, whether he saw his life's ideal in a civil righteousness, or in a philosophical righteousness, or in the righteousness of the Pharisees. From all this, which belongs only to the elements, the rudiments of the world (*στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*, Gal. iv. 3, Col. ii. 8, 20), the gospel calls us away, that we may attain a better righteousness, which has not entered into any man's heart, namely, the *righteousness of faith*, in which we obtain the beginning of a new righteousness of life, where all the truthful elements of the former righteousness, freed from the errors and perversities cleaving to them, first occupy their right, that is, their subordinate place. God will of grace *give* us the righteousness that avails before Him (*δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης*, Rom. v. 17), by which we for Christ's sake are accepted by God, but are hereby also put in the position, under the guidance of His grace, to carry on our own sanctification, that is, our progressive personal normalization.

When we said that the requirement to turn is addressed to



all, we by no means except from this those who have been received into the bosom of the Church by infant baptism. For not to speak of this, that many of them have fallen from their baptismal covenant, and must be called back to it again, there will occur in the life of all of them a period in which the life of this world gains such an influence, such a power over them, that there is need of an awakening and conversion. A merely ecclesiastical Christianity becomes a Christianity of habit, a Pharisaic righteousness, if it does not develop to a personal living Christianity.

A weak and shadowy image of conversion and of the new way is found in ancient and modern philosophers, who have compared the life of man to a voyage, and have distinguished between a first and second voyage (*ὁ δεύτερος πλοῦς*), by the latter of which one enters on another and new way, and repairs what was wrong in the first voyage. "The first voyage" is life, so long as it is lived after the lusts, the sensual illusions and the current opinions of the multitude (the majority). "The second voyage" takes place when one begins to philosophize, to live according to reason, and thereby to part with much that those living in illusions cannot part with. The decision for this second voyage is, as a rule, evoked by contrary winds, namely, sufferings and adversities, which make the man conscious that he is sailing on in mist and in error, and is running the risk of stranding on dangerous sandbanks and rocks. Thus Schopenhauer calls the period when "the will to live" is predominant, with its ideals of happiness, the first voyage; the period, again, when one gives up the will to live, and becomes dead to those ideals, the second voyage. Yet this is only a very poor phantom. The way that is in truth the new way, the heathen wise men did not discover, as also the most dangerous sandbanks and rocks remained unknown to them. The land of glory to whose coasts Christianity bids us voyage, lay outside their circle of vision. In the Lord's parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the history of heathenism is depicted, we see the twofold voyage in its true meaning. The first is that in which the son *leaves his father's house*, and wastes his substance in the far country. The second is *the return to the father's house*. The life of the Apostle Paul also shows us the same twofold

voyage. The first is that in which he, a zealot for the law, pursues the righteousness of the Pharisees; but the other is that of his second period of life, when he casts the Pharisaic righteousness into the sea, and counting all else as loss, pursues only the righteousness of Christ.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

§ 58.

If a man is to be converted, he must, by the leadings of God's grace (outward and inner leadings), *be awakened* to a living knowledge of the law of God, must above all come to the knowledge of the first and great commandment, that he may thereby be brought to know his sin and guilt, to know that his root-evil lies in the position he occupies *to God*, which his previous knowledge of the law did not let him see. But it is equally needful that he be awakened to get a clear view of the gospel, if he is not to despair about his sin. Both are wrought by *the word of God*, ordinarily through Christian preaching, which is the means ordained by God to this end, and whose chief mark is this, that it does not consist in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. ii. 4). But God's word may come to man in other ways besides Christian preaching. The chief thing is that *Christ* Himself come, by means of the word, to reveal Himself to the soul, and to take shape for it. Through Christ we gain the complete knowledge of the law. Who can hear in a receptive hour Christ's Sermon on the Mount, without feeling deep pain within him at his infinite distance from these requirements, without feeling that these tones, these blessings, come from regions that are our true home, but from which we are far removed, as outcasts in the far country; that, to fulfil these requirements, a thorough change must take place in us; that the only thing possible to us is the feeling of an unutterable internal poverty, the feeling that our own righteousness, our Stoical ideals, our æsthetic education, our moderate morality, are a wretched nullity, in which we must feel a hunger and thirst after a

better righteousness? But not only is the knowledge of the law laid open to us through the word of Christ, but through Christ's whole manifestation. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In Him, God's holiness has revealed itself to us in human form. In Him, law is in indissoluble union with liberty; in Him, the good has become *nature*. In His holiness, Christ is for judgment to the race and the individual; for in His pure human nature we see, as in a glass, how deeply we have sunk. But He whose mere appearance reproves our conscience, is also come for our salvation. As He is the personal revelation of the holiness of God, so also of God's grace. This union of law and gospel manifests itself in quite a special way in the cross of Christ. In the cross of Christ, on which He bore our punishment for us, as the great offering of atonement for the sin of the world, we see God's holy wrath against sin, see what a frightful thing sin is, for which such a sacrifice was necessary; but from the same cross the whole world's and also our comfort springs, because the soul of this sacrifice is free, sin-forgiving love. In Christ, the crucified and risen One, we perceive the intensest earnestness of life, the knowledge of the inviolable requirement of the law, of sin, of guilt, and of death as the wages of sin, but likewise also the intensest joy of life, namely, redemption from all this evil to the glorious liberty of the children of God.

When these two things in the manifestation of Christ make the right impression on a human soul, a twofold effect will also be produced, namely, repentance and faith. However different the psychological forms may be in different individuals, whether repentance express itself, as Methodism one-sidedly requires, as a violent penitential struggle with the anguish and terrors of hell, or as a quieter pain; whether the whole movement occur at one stroke and suddenly, or proceed more slowly during a longer period in a man's life; we are still brought back to this twofold effect, if a conversion is to take place. This order is ever confirmed, that God leads a man into death, in order to lead him through it to life.

## REPENTANCE AND FAITH.—RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.

## § 59.

Repentance is a deep internal concern, a soul-pain and contrition concerning sin, in which the man himself judges his sin, and honours the truth against himself. It must not be confounded with ill-humour at having acted imprudently, which many men call repentance; and as little with fear of the consequences of our actions, in which there need be no trace of sin-pain. But religious repentance, of which we here speak, is not only a pain for this or that single sin, though it may also be this, like the repentance of the apostle for having persecuted the Church of God: it is grief for the whole sinful and guilty state, for *separation from God*. Nay, this grief at separation from God, at being in the far country without God, may come upon us without any single sin more than another burdening the conscience; as Luther in his day, without having to confess any single sin, uttered the lament, "My sin! my sin!" and did so in the feeling that on the whole it was ill with him, and that he was under the wrath of God. In repentance a man willingly submits to judgment, while judging himself likewise; and willingly submits to the rebuke of God's Spirit, while likewise accusing himself. Yet true repentance is not a continuance in this contrition. Fruitful repentance passes over to the determination, "I will arise and go to my Father," passes over into faith in God's pitying grace, and lays hold of the comfort of the gospel. Faith without repentance is indeed only a dead faith, a mere acceptance of the truth not proceeding from the heart. But repentance without faith must finally pass into despair, because the man has nothing in himself wherewith he could liquidate his debt. In true repentance the honest *will* to be redeemed asserts itself, and the man submits to be redeemed, to be justified before God, and that of pure grace. (Compare the author's *Dogmatics*, § 227 ff.)

Spinoza and Fichte rejected repentance. Instead of lingering in useless penitential complaints, constantly looking back upon the past, on sins which yet are a mere nullity and

empty appearance, one must exclusively cast one's glance forwards; without delay enter on a new way, by acting, by doing *good*, and thus reforming oneself. One only squanders time by the retrospect of repentance; time must be employed in right actions. This whole reasoning presupposes an entire ignorance, a non-comprehension of sin, and guilt, and grace. The truth that may lie in it is only this, that repentance must not become a state beyond which one makes no advance, not a fruitless brooding over ourselves and our past, so that we come to no *volition* for the future. But what is entirely overlooked is this truth, that what is important for a man is not only what he does, but what he *becomes*; and, moreover, not only what we ourselves do, but just as much what God does and works in us. It is overlooked that repentance is a necessary transition in the religious life-development of man, a necessary element in the moral creation of man,<sup>1</sup> in order that he may come to die to sin and become what God has determined. By the internal contrition of the old sinful ego, that internal death, the new man is to be born. But for dying time is also needed; and the painful moments of repentance, in which nothing is done externally, may bring a man farther, may procure for him an infinitely greater blessing, than many years' labour spent in good works of self-righteousness. Nay, in such moments or hours, when repentance and faith are born in the soul, a man may, to speak with old Master Eckart, gain back all the time he has squandered in the world. For hereby he is brought to a standpoint above time and the world, on which he gains new possibilities (potencies); nay, in one day far more happens than otherwise in a long course of years. The faith which is developed from repentance, is faith in the gospel; that God for Christ's sake forgives us our sins; that we are justified before God, not by the works of the law, but of God's grace, through faith in the redemption that is in Christ. From the penitent sinner, who in faith appropriates the gospel, guilt is taken away, for Christ has nailed our bond to the cross (Col. ii. 14); and, justified by faith, and received by God as His children, we have joy and an access to the Father, and may as children pray in the Spirit that assures us of our election as God's children: *Abba*,

<sup>1</sup> Sibbern's *Pathologie*.



Father! From the righteousness of faith all self-righteousness is excluded. But we are not so justified before God as if our repentance and faith were a merit that could satisfy for our sins. Our repentance as well as our faith is incomplete; and it is certainly no merit that he who is nearly drowned seizes the rescuing hand held out to him, although he would be frightfully guilty of his own destruction if he proudly rejected the rescuing hand. In this sense we say that our righteousness is *outside of us*, because no advantage present in us, no virtue or amiability peculiar to us, can be urged as a ground why we should be recognised as righteous before God; for impurity cleaves to the very best that is in us. It is exclusively Christ's righteousness which of grace is imputed to us. Yet this has to be *appropriated in an upright heart*. But the confidence and the comfort of faith is this, that the righteousness of Christ *belongs to us*, shelters and overshadows us; that God sees us in Christ, in Him the Beloved and Lovely, in whom He is well pleased, and that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And though our faith, by which we have accepted and are united to Him, be but a little seed, a grain of mustard-seed, yet we belong, despite all our unworthiness, to *Him* in whom God has reconciled the world to Himself.

## REGENERATION AND BAPTISM.

## § 60.

Every one who by repentance and faith has found salvation in Christ, is conscious that the revolution that has taken place within him, the change by which he who previously had the centre of his life in himself or in the world, has now found Christ as the sun around which henceforth his life moves—that this change, though it has taken place with the deepest and most earnest movement of the will, is not derived from his own power. He is conscious of being overcome by a stronger, to whom he even, often and long, offered a resistance though vainly; and that this his new state has been produced by absolutely nothing proceeding from the spirit of this world, not even in the best sense of the word, not wrought

by culture, nor by human science and art, which are here entirely powerless. He can only refer it to *a work of the Lord*, which is so far supernatural as it is not to be explained from this nature and its powers. But with this it is of the greatest moment that one should not too soon think that he has made salvation his. For only then has he really appropriated it, when, *in the Church of Christ*, where he has consciously found salvation, he has also appropriated what is needful *firmly to establish* it, that the righteousness of faith be not dependent upon changing moods and feelings, and has also appropriated what is necessary that *a new personality* may be formed in him, having in Christ the *permanent* centre of its life, along with the possibility of progressive growth in the fellowship of Christ, whereby alone his salvation can be completed. Salvation is really and fully appropriated only when a man has appropriated not merely awakening, but also *new-creating*, regenerating grace. Therefore the Church brings him not only the word of reconciliation with God, but likewise directs him to baptism as God's covenant of grace, and the laver of regeneration in the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration, by which a new personality is formed, with the possibility and conditions for its progressive growth, is different from awakening, the state in which the Spirit works only in preparatory, though often mighty motions, but by which the new personality is not yet founded, a state in which repentance and faith stand but on moveable, insecure ground. Regeneration is not wrought by the word alone, but by word and sacrament in indissoluble union. The apostle says, "Ye are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of the living God. And this is the word that is preached unto you" (1 Pet. i. 23, 25). And the word that is preached points to baptism (Acts ii. 38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"), where God performs His *foundational* work, embracing the whole life, the whole subsequent development. For by baptism the man is not merely externally incorporated into the Church of Christ, but becomes a member of the body of Christ, is incorporated into the *permanent* communion of Christ, as well as into His means and effects of grace, whereby he receives the conditions for a progressive

development of personality. In baptism God sets up His covenant of grace with man, raises the rainbow of grace above his life, while the man is baptized into and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that is, into the communion of the three-one God. We are baptized into the righteousness of Christ, to the forgiveness of sins, and to adoption, that we may die with the crucified Christ, and may walk in a new life in the power of the Risen One (Rom. vi. 3 ff.). And as baptism is God's covenant of grace, so it is likewise a laver of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit (Tit. iii. 5). For in baptism the Lord puts Himself into a permanent relation of communion to the Adamitic individual (the child of Adam) by means of the Holy Spirit, and there proceeds from Him a renewing influence on the *natural ground* of this individual life, which is the presupposition for the self-conscious, personal life, that thus the man may be prepared to be a temple of the Spirit of God. The gift of grace of baptism, which is one with the communion of the Lord, includes in it potentially, or as a fruitful, life-potent possibility, the whole fulness of the blessings of this communion. The development of it may indeed be hindered by unbelief and worldliness; and then this gift remains without blessing for the man, nay, it may become a judgment to him. But where, by means of the preached word, the hindrances mentioned are removed out of the way, this fruitful possibility will also come to take form in the self-conscious, personal life, although it will never be exhausted in it. A Christian ever bears in his unconscious life a greater riches than in his self-conscious life, in that relation of grace, namely, in which God has placed Himself to him, beyond all his experience and far ahead of it, has placed Himself to him in the background of his life, where a fountain from eternity has been opened to permeate his whole life.

When, with an apostle, we said above that regeneration takes place by means of the preached word, but also said that it is baptism by which the foundation to regeneration is laid, this implies that regeneration must be accomplished in a two-fold form, if the new man that is coming to the birth is to be fully brought forth. Even in the natural human life we distinguish between self-conscious and unconscious or pre-

conscious life. The unconscious life is the presupposition of the self-conscious; and every natural human life possesses in the unconscious its greatest riches. All that we call genius rests simply on the unconscious life, from whose depths the spiritual contents, with their twilight, their sparkling, their flashes, rise up into consciousness. But we must likewise also distinguish in the life of the new man between the conscious and the unconscious; and between the unconscious life and the sacraments there is a deep connection. The sacraments have indeed a side from which they enter into consciousness; but had they none other than this, they would be no *mysteries*. Regeneration in baptism embraces the unconscious life, and the relation, lying beyond personal experience, of grace to the individual. But in order that the effects arising from within, from the ground of nature, may become powerful and active, there must also take place from without, namely, by the preaching of the word, an influence on the self-conscious life, whereby the hindrances that here occur may be overcome and set aside, and the man be brought to make grace his own. There is a sum of gracious effects that *cannot* otherwise reach man than only in the way of the self-consciousness, but which are derived from the same objective relation of grace, in which God has placed Himself to man in baptism, that baptism whose normal form is simply infant baptism. Taking the words in the higher and spiritual sense, we may say that regeneration in baptism is the *physical* side of the thing, whereby we become partakers of the divine "nature;" regeneration, again, in the personal, self-conscious life, which is inconceivable without the preaching of the divine word, the *ethical* side. Both forms are necessary, if the regeneration is to be complete (as it were full-born and ripe). Regeneration in baptism alone, without a personal new birth, is only embryonic; and what is called personal regeneration without baptism, lacks the right presupposition for the personal life, the rich background filled by grace, the supporting foundation; wherefore adults who have not received infant baptism, after they have been awakened by the preaching of the word, must be directed to baptism, in order to be really and fully born again.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare the author's *Dogmatics*, § 253 ff.

## HINDRANCES TO CONVERSION.

## § 61.

The gospel is "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," and "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." These words give us the answer to the question, Wherefore so many men will not be converted, will not be born again?

Above all, it is the opposition, the pride of the human heart, that takes offence at the gospel. We are not at all at liberty to say that the inconceivable in itself causes offence and dislike. For even in natural things man is surrounded by the incomprehensible, and must constantly believe the incomprehensible. No, it is this definite incomprehensible, this Christ manifest in the flesh, this supernatural revelation concerning sin and grace, that gives the offence. The understanding, which is subservient to the will, *will* not accept this revelation as it is given, desires another revelation, another Saviour than He who actually has come into this world; and, in fact, this requirement comes to mean a Jewish Messiah, with whom the understanding or "the reason" would be well able to come to terms. The understanding arms itself with a thousand sophisms, a thousand seeming reasons against the gospel, although the man himself does not always perceive the nullity of these fallacies. At one time it is found entirely improbable that the righteousness of another (of Christ) should be imputed to us, as righteousness, personal normality, must simply be a work of our own freedom. In this is entirely overlooked the central and organic connection of Christ with the human race, entirely overlooked that, in order that we may be enabled to pursue with true freedom of will the righteousness of *life*, or the normalization of our life, a righteousness of grace must first be *bestowed* on us, the righteousness of *faith*; that God's grace must first give us a new foundation, must first set us on a new basis, ere we can endeavour after the righteousness of life; for he who has fallen into the water or into a bog cannot seize and draw himself out by the hair, that he may then do his day's work. Now an appeal is made to the unchangeableness of nature's



laws and the impossibility of miracle, by which indeed more faith is manifested than knowledge. For that miracle is impossible is not really known; it is only believed to be impossible while the ordinary course of nature and the world is blindly believed in. Again it is declared, with Lessing, that "accidental historical truths are not able to establish eternal truths of reason." As if the great fact of the appearance of Christ, which forms the centre of the history of the world, were an accidental (!) historical truth; or as if what we need for the salvation of our soul were nothing but eternal truths of reason (!). Heathenism had eternal truths of reason and ideas to the full, and yet could not find redemption by them. What, on the contrary, humanity needs are *facts*, and above all a *new creation*, a new life, by means of Christ personally present in His Church, which means far more than a historical individual that had been present in former times. Again, strict scientific proofs are required for the truths of the gospel before men will believe; and with this requirement there is often combined a complaint that one *cannot* believe, however willingly one might, because one's scientific conscience forbids it. And meanwhile it is entirely overlooked that stringent, exact proofs for the gospel cannot and should not be given, as little as they can be given for any truth that appeals to our freedom of will and our conscience. If they had to be given for the gospel, the philosophers, the thinkers, would be nearest to salvation, as they would be best able to comprehend these proofs; and the simple and babes would be farthest from salvation, contrary to Christ's word, that the Father has revealed to babes what He has hidden from the wise and prudent (Matt. xi. 25).

But even allowing all hindrances of the understanding to be set aside, it by no means therefore follows that conversion will now take place. Even then any one can still say, "I do not deny these facts; but I do not need them, and also feel no desire for them." The proper hindrance lies not in the understanding, but in the will, in self-righteousness. Men will not give God the glory, will not accept the confession of sin in the sense in which it is required by the gospel, will not allow that it is so bad with oneself and with the world, which one loves to view in an optimistic

light, as God's word reveals it to us. Men will not be redeemed exclusively, and without any personal merit, through a miracle of grace. For all this perverts not merely all the conceptions of the natural man, but also requires the deepest humiliation of heart, and that even he who in a spiritual sense is highly exalted among men place himself on the standpoint of the publican.

### § 62.

Yet not merely is the opposition and pride of the human heart a hindrance to conversion, but also the *despondency* of that heart. The gospel is so great, so overwhelmingly great, and the human heart so narrow, when it has to believe in the truly great. Even when the gospel is viewed as a mere invention, it appears so great; but that this should be reality, transcends our power of comprehension. And now to believe besides that this unutterable magnitude belongs *to me* also, a single one among the multitude of sinners, that Christ died and rose again for me also—I dare not believe it. And indeed it needs the grace of God that we may take courage to believe this; but this is given to him who himself stretches forth his hands after faith and prays for it, not to him who believes his own despondent heart more than God's clear promises.

And as the despondent heart does not venture to appropriate the vastly great gift offered to it, it is also frightened back by the great requirements that Christ makes of His followers. "These requirements are too high for me; that requires too much of me; I cannot become a Christian." And while men thus speak, they forget that He who makes such demands on us, promises us also His help: His educative guidance, the power of His grace, that we may endeavour to fulfil them. The rich youth who went away from the Lord grieved, because he could not sacrifice his earthly fortune (Matt. xix. 22), is an example of this despondency.

A special form of this despondent heart is heart-sloth, that is, where the man in natural indolence and cowardice shuns the effort of will needful for the work of conversion, shrinks back from the death in which he has to die to his old self, the death in which he is to leave the world, with the worldly views in which he has been living, and has to break with his

old habits, a state in which he therefore cannot come to the decisive determination, and constantly *defers* his conversion (Augustine prayed, before the time of his conversion, that God would take from him the worldly, impure heart, but "not yet!"). This sloth and procrastination of heart causes the many *half* conversions, where a man stops on the way, without reaching the goal; and also leads to conversion being deferred to the death-bed, where at times it *may* indeed take place, but where it is by no means always given to have at command the outward and inner conditions for it.

### § 63.

But the deepest hindrance to conversion is the *lack of uprightness* towards himself, which lack is innate in the human heart. For God has, it is true, made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions (Eccles. vii. 30). And this inclination to seek out inventions that conflict with uprightness, is found more or less in every human heart, and must be overcome if it is to come to a thorough conversion. It is found in the defiant and proud heart, that will not see itself as it is, constantly conjures up an image of its own goodness and greatness, which is not based on truth, and never will descend to a thorough humility. It is found in the despondent and slothful heart, that constantly declares it *would* willingly be saved, but *cannot* believe, because faith is too high for it. If this heart would only see itself, and that thoroughly, as it is, faith would not be too high for it. It would come to know that, like the rich youth in the gospel, it is still, in one respect or other, depending more on this world than on the Lord, is still afraid to make just the sacrifice that the Lord requires, and that its will to be saved is not yet the right, earnest will. For to the right, earnest will there belongs entire surrender to the Lord and His word. Try, then, to do the Lord's will, to surrender to Him, and take Him at His word; and see then whether He ever will abandon thee.

### § 64.

But where this lack of uprightness, where this inclination to seek out many inventions (pretexts), gains the upper hand,

it leads not only to the rejection of the gospel, but may also lead to a certain *seeming conversion*. The beginning of such a seeming conversion, that never goes beyond the beginning, is seen in men who have indeed a feeling of the necessity of conversion, but whose heart's ground is corrupted, and who get into a hypocritical asking and seeking for the truth, without ever finding it, because they have not the earnest will to find it. A type of these souls we find described in 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7, where the apostle speaks of "women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They live in an incessant inquiry, an unwearied conversation about the sacred truths, but at the same time live on in their lusts; and although they are ever learning and ever asking, they never find the answer, and that because they do not ask sincerely. To a seeming conversion, that utterance of the Lord applies, Luke xi. 24-26: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." This word is abundantly applicable. An unclean spirit, for instance, lust, is gone out of a man, especially because he is no more able to commit the said sin. He turns, assumes a robe of piety, observes all the rites of the Church, imagines that he has entered on the way of the new life, while in reality he is still on the old way. The unclean spirit returns in another form, for instance, as spiritual pride and censoriousness, while he now, in his imaginary sanctity, most unmercifully and severely rebukes the evil lusts of youth, and is zealous against the vanity of the world. Instead of lust, avarice and usury now perhaps possess his heart, and the last state of such a man has become worse than the first (2 Pet. ii. 20 ff.). Such seeming conversions recur under various forms, and are hidden under the righteousness of the Pharisees. The passing over of so many people of the world to Catholicism is, amid many modifications, essentially of the nature described.

If we consider the weakness of our heart, and how great

the dangers and hindrances that must be overcome in order that real conversion may take place, the despondent heart may well ask, "Who then can be saved?" (Matt. xix. 25). And to this we have no other answer than the following: "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous" (Prov. ii. 7); and, "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart" (Ps. vii. 11).



## LIFE IN FOLLOWING CHRIST.

### THE STATE OF GRACE.

#### § 65.

IN opposition to the life under the law and sin, the life of the regenerate is a life under grace, a life *in the state of grace*, which, however, does not mean that it is no longer in the state of imperfection and sinfulness, and is already in the kingdom of glory, but that the power of sin is broken, the guilt taken away, that *the true relation to God*, the true communion with God, which was thrust back and bound in the state of sin's dominion, is now by the grace in Christ become dominant and essentially determinative. The regenerate man has the centre of his life no more in himself, nor in the world, but in the crucified and risen Christ. On the ground of his baptism, and justified by faith, he now lives his life in *following Christ*, a life after the example and word of Christ, and likewise in the power of Christ, while he stands under the continued influence of the workings of grace proceeding from Christ. Henceforth the requirement applies,—and Christ's Spirit fulfils it in us,—“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. ii. 5). Henceforth the exhortation applies: “Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. vii. 1).

It has been asked, What are the marks by which it may be known that a man is in the state of grace? As there may be different stages of perfection within the state of grace, it is important not to set forth these marks in such a way as would only apply to the more perfect stages, but not to the more imperfect. If it were, for instance, to be said that only such men are in the state of grace as love God above all things, and have attained to the glorious liberty of the children

of God, this were an indefinite and equivocal description, and fitted to disquiet many who are still earnestly striving, and to make them doubt whether they really are in the state of grace. As the chief condition for a man being in the state of grace, we mention, first, that the life must be firmly grounded on the foundation of baptism. But although, in a certain sense, it may be said that all the baptized are placed under grace, it must yet on the other hand be allowed that, in order to stand in grace, it is not only requisite to be baptized, but also that we stand in *personal* relation to the grace that has been bestowed on us in baptism. And here, presupposing baptism, we know of nothing else to be mentioned but *repentance* and *faith*. Repentance, as repenting of sin and regret for sin, is not exclusively in place only in the history of the once occurring conversion. For although conversion may be regarded as a single event in a definite portion of man's life, the matter is by no means so that we are done with conversion once for all. We need a continued conversion, "daily sorrow and repentance," with ever new renunciation of the kingdom of darkness, and the spirit of darkness, till the day of our death. But inseparable from this is the faith that has not only *once* appropriated the comfort of the gospel, but daily appropriates it anew.<sup>1</sup> This constant renewal in faith is, however, only possible in that we earnestly strive and oppose all that would disturb the life of faith in us, that is, only by a sincere will and resolve after righteousness of life and holiness. Thus if a Christian also sins,—and "in many things we offend all,"—*as long as* he ever repents again of his sin, and may be renewed in sincere sorrow for it; so long as he is raised up again by faith in the gospel, offered to him in the means of grace; and so long as he is renewed to obedience, and ever afresh engages in the struggle: so long he stands under grace, despite his sinfulness and incompleteness. And, on the other hand, it is evident that he who feels no regret for sin, in whom faith is only "a dead fly," an outward acceptance of certain statements, without heart-communion with the Lord; that he who knows of no struggle or resistance against sin, cannot possibly be in the state of grace.

In this view of the matter, we can here appropriate a de-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Harless, *Ethik*, p. 248 ff. (7th ed.). Translated in Clark's series.

scription of the state of grace, as it is contained in those words of our old Church prayer, that serves for opening our Sunday services. We there pray, namely, that from the preaching of the divine word we may learn "to sorrow for our sins, in life and death to believe in Jesus, and daily to be improved (renewed) in a holy life." True, we by no means build on this reformation of our life, or on our sanctification, our hope and confidence of the forgiveness of our sins, which, on the contrary, we build solely and alone on the righteousness of Christ made ours by faith, as our only comfort in life and death. But where there is sincere faith, this cannot but impel us to new obedience, nay, it already includes this obedience within itself.

#### § 66.

Life in following Christ we can only imagine as a life in progressive sanctification. As a continued purification from sins, and as the continued development and forming of the new life that is given to us, and by which all natural gifts and powers are gradually brought under the dominion of Christ, our sanctification is at once a work of grace that gives the man a divine progress and growth, and a work of the labouring and striving personal freedom of the will. It is developed through a connected series of Christian *virtues*, through a variety of *stages*, finally through a change of spiritual *states* and moods.

#### SANCTIFICATION AND THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

#### § 67.

So long as progress in sanctification lasts, the virtue of the new man, or perfection in the fellowship of Christ, is only an approximation to the truly perfect. But Christian virtue stands, as regards its deepest ground, on the perfect principle, grace, that has placed the human will in fundamental agreement with the law, and that after the example of Christ, which the Apostle John expresses in these words: "He that is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John

iii. 9). The essence of Christian virtue is thus the new fundamental direction of the human will in the power of regeneration, its new movement (as to its deepest characteristic) to the ideal in Christ. Viewed in this its essence, virtue is but one. But the one virtue is to be realized in a multiplicity of virtues. And here it is that the imperfect and relative (the merely comparative) enters.

Among the Christian virtues we mention *love* as the chief. But we cannot name love without also naming *freedom*, which also emerges of itself, as soon as we meditate on the example of Christ. Love and freedom are inseparable, nay, in the depth of the Christian mental life one, although in the development of life they appear as two. A love without freedom, a surrender which is not a free self-determining unforced surrender, has no moral worth. And, again, only in surrender is the true self-dependence or freedom developed and gained. We may therefore say that there are two *chief* virtues, love and freedom, of which love, rooted in belief in grace, is the *fundamental* virtue; for love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. xiii. 10), and liberty is the handmaid of love. Stoicism in the heathen world, that does not know love, and its followers down to the most recent times, put liberty as the fundamental virtue, namely, liberty as unconditional self-determination, self-dependence, independence of all that is external and strange, agreement with oneself and his formal law. Christianity, again, has revealed to us that the true self-dependence can only be gained in love, in surrender, that human freedom is not intended to satisfy itself, to live to itself, but in free surrender to be the *organ*, the useful instrument of God. For Stoicism, the most perfect moral character is he who shows the greatest self-dependence, independence and consistency. In the Christian view, again, a character most nearly approaches the goal of perfection when it shows the greatest union of surrender and self-dependence, of love and liberty. The pattern is given us in Christ, as the radiance of God's glory and the expressed image of His being (Heb. i. 3). God is love, and precisely in this the absolutely self-dependent being.

Among philosophers, the elder Fichte is, as regards his position to the points of view here made prominent, a remark-

able phenomenon. In his first period, freedom was to him the highest. "Self-dependence, that ever presents a point to the world, while dependence turns to it only an empty plane." Yet he could not in the end be satisfied with empty self-dependence, and a merely formal point directed against the world. He attained to the knowledge that he has expressed in his *Directions for a Blessed Life*, that freedom could only be an organ, that love to God, resting on God's love to us, is the highest. True, indeed, he understood this so that he now went over to the opposite extreme. He conceived God, mystic-pantheistically, as the eternal formless Being, in which the human ego, the ego in its earlier period absolutely self-dependent, standing in its own virtue and righteousness, now became an absolutely dependent and impersonal vessel for the life and working of the deity. While he had formerly said, "I" unconditionally determine myself, "I" work and act; he now in his famous sonnet said:

"The Eternal One  
Lives in my life, and in my sight He sees."<sup>1</sup>

He sought the Christian life of love, which yet is not to be attained in the way of Pantheism. For the real unity of love and liberty, love and self-dependence, is only possible for men in communion with the personal God, who will make His creatures not vessels without a self and will, dependent reflections of His being, but imparts to them a relative self-dependence, without which they could neither sin nor be redeemed to the liberty of the children of God. When Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20), he describes himself as a free organ for God's grace in Christ; and everywhere we see in him the *self-dependent* character, even because we see him bound in his Lord as a messenger of Christ, a *servant of Christ* and a *child of God*.

We therefore consider the Christian virtues under the twofold aspect, love and liberty.

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Fichte's *Leben und literarischer Briefwechsel*. By his son, J. H. Fichte, I. 339.



## I. CHRISTIAN LOVE.

## § 68.

Christian love is love to God in Christ. But love to God in Christ embraces as well surrender to God's kingdom outside of us, as surrender to His kingdom in us, embraces love of our *neighbours* as well as true *self-love*. There are many moralists who would entirely exclude self-love from Christian ethics, because one can only love another, not himself, while self-love would be one with vile egoism. That the expression is liable to misconception we do not at all deny. But were we to do away the expression, we must in any case recur to the thing. We remain on the ground of Holy Scripture when we retain the expression. For the Scripture says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*," which presupposes that there is also a healthy, normal self-love. The sympathetic is never without the autopathic; and Christ's example shows us not only surrender and self-sacrifice, but also self-preservation and self-assertion. Besides, the true conception of self-love is by no means love to my sinful, merely natural ego, but surrender to the God-given ideal of my individuality, to my eternal destiny in God, to the realization of which my lower ego, with its worldly lusts and desires, must be sacrificed. Christian self-love is thus interest for my salvation, my personal perfection in God, to which it also belongs that I become complete in humility, and so my education to a willing instrument of the will of God. Whether we think of the love of God in the stricter sense, that is, of the proper religious relation to God, or of love to men, the interest of self-preservation and self-maintenance will still assert itself. A love without any self-assertion were an indefinite melting into the great All, a self-dissolution, with which no individuality and personality can stand. Granted, vile egoism must not be mingled here. A criterion that any one has true self-love is, that he can feel a thorough and deep dissatisfaction with himself, with his sinfulness, which shows him the reverse and contradiction of what he should be. To be able "to hate himself" (John xii. 25), or, as it may also be expressed, to *judge* himself after God's word (1 Cor. xi. 31),

and that with *righteousness*, is the condition of being capable of self-love in the right sense.

After the example of the love of Christ, which on the one hand, in the internal relation to the Father, is the appropriating, invisibly sacrificing, on the other hand, in relation to the world, the active and suffering love, we describe the love of disciples partly as the appropriating, contemplative, mystical love, partly as the practical love that enters into relation to the world, where it reveals itself as well in action as in suffering.

#### APPROPRIATING LOVE.

#### § 69.

The Christianity of *appropriation* is better and higher than that of works, as certainly as God's grace and truth in Christ stands infinitely higher than all the works that we can perform to the glory of God. And Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet to hear His word, chose the good part more than Martha (Luke x. 42). In an organized form, the appropriation of the grace of God in Christ, as by means of the word and sacraments, is exhibited in the celebration of public worship. The renewed appropriation of the saving grace of God is the chief element as regards edification, the establishment of the personality on the foundation that is laid (1 Cor. iii. 19) there, where the individual feels himself a member of the Church, a member of the body of Christ. As it has been justly said that he who does not go forwards goes backwards, it can also be said with truth, that he that is not edified falls down and crumbles in pieces, that he that is not raised above the world necessarily sinks (*non elevari est labi*). And experience teaches that those who neglect edification and elevation, through the means of grace appointed by the Lord, degenerate spiritually (religiously and morally); they sink deeper and deeper into worldliness, so that at last they become covered with worldliness like a crust, that makes them insusceptible for what is above the world. A Christian will therefore, to promote his inner life, regularly take part in *the public worship in the assembled congregation*. But beyond and

beside this, a Christian must also have his special worship in the closet, must get quiet hours for meditation and prayer. The separate or private worship becomes indeed one-sided and morbid when it is sundered from the worship of the congregation. On the other hand, however, public worship has not had its right effect, if there do not follow it, even in the life of the individual, in the midst of every-day work, partly an echo, partly especially an independent application of the gifts of grace, which the Lord has not merely bestowed on His Church as a whole, but also on every individual in the Church, that every man may become perfect in Christ Jesus (Col. i. 28). Word and prayer are means of grace that are to be used even outside the assembly of the Church.

## CONTEMPLATIVE LOVE.

*Pious Meditation and God's Word.*

## § 70.

We are to love God above all things. In this the requirement is also contained: we are to *know* God above all things; and in the life of a Christian there must therefore be a continued effort after a deeper and more internal understanding of the revelation of God in Christ. Pious consideration of the things belonging to the kingdom of God, we designate contemplation, in which are included meditation, investigation, and reflection, which weighs and considers what is single, and its relation to the whole, while contemplation embraces the manifold in one joint-picture, one view. Contemplation arises from a believing mental life. For in the depths of the mind these two chief questions are stirred, "What is truth?" and "What shall I do to be saved?" And if to a Christian these questions have been already answered once for all, yet are they to be ever answered anew for the confirmation and growth of the inner man. The contemplative love, as it occurs in the religious life, is therefore not an unpathological (insusceptible) love, but inseparable from pious mental movements (affections), from feelings of admiration, reverence and

thankfulness, from joy, care and pain, sadness and longing, trust and confidence. But all Christian contemplation, to which not only theologians, philosophers, and theosophists, but all Christians are called, must take place on the foundation of the word of God, and must be tried by that touchstone. By this alone does contemplation become truly edifying.

### § 71.

To read the Scripture for edification is quite the opposite of the way it is read by those who bring to it only the doubts, objections, and difficulties that have been diffused by an unbelieving, naturalistic criticism—a criticism that judges books, the contents of which it does not understand, because it lacks the requisite organ. Only he that seeks honestly and simply can find truth in the Bible; and, in the strictest sense of the word, only the regenerate can read it to his edification, because he brings with him faith in Christ as his Saviour, in whom he has found the righteousness of faith; because he brings with him his own experience of sin and grace, and, seeking wisdom in the Scripture, seeks the wisdom that is after godliness (Tit. i. 1), “a wisdom that lies in concealment” (Job xi. 6; Ps. li. 8; 1 Cor. ii. 7). And although an evangelical Christian rejects the Romish doctrine of an infallible Church, yet he follows in his connected reading of the Scripture the leading and guidance of the Church, in bringing with him faith in his baptismal confession, in *the Apostles' Creed* as the expression of the great facts on which the kingdom of God is built up, and in this is especially guided by the profound doctrines of the evangelical Church on *law and gospel*.

The contemplative sentiment and virtue proves itself as obedience to God's word, even to its “hard sayings” (John vi. 60), when it is the saying of Him to whom, in the confidence of our hearts and consciences, we have said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John vi. 68). But, under the humble relation of obedience to the *authority* of the word of God, the relation of *freedom* and inwardness is to be developed, that that word may become spirit and life in us, that which thoroughly determines

*from within outwards* in our reflection and judgment about divine things. The development of contemplative virtue rests on the same two elements on which all sanctification rests, the combative and the educative. It becomes the problem of a Christian to purify his thinking by means of the word of God from the erroneous ideas of the natural man about divine things. For by nature we desire another God and another Redeemer than Him who has actually appeared to us. Moreover, we have all by nature Nicodemus' thoughts (John iii.), take offence at the divine secrets, and would interpret and explain them away after our own understanding. But what is needed is to become familiar with the Redeemer, as He is actually revealed to us, to familiarize ourselves with the thought that "after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, and that thus things despised by the world God hath chosen" (1 Cor. i. 21, 28). Here that word applies that Hamann said, speaking of the "ignorance" of Socrates: "The seed-corn of our natural wisdom must die, must pass away in ignorance, that from this death, from this nothingness, the life and essence of a higher knowledge may spring forth and be made anew." And if we keep *silence* for the word ("Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," said Samuel), God's word will, through its power of truth bearing witness to itself in our conscience, constantly gain the victory over the wisdom of man; and even the imperfect form of the letter in the sacred writers, of which adversaries have made so much, must serve to prove the divine truth of the Spirit and the word presented in weak earthen vessels. The confident assertions of the "spuriousness" of these writings do not affect us in the least, assurances brought forward by a criticism without experience in a religious-psychological point of view, and standing outside the matter and the inner connection. These contents and value "prove themselves well." Nobody romances thus. Even independent of the Scripture as Scripture, Christ has proved Himself to our conscience as the truth, by means of the preached word, and the testimony that the Spirit has given to it within us.



## § 72.

The Holy Scripture is applicable not merely to the individual, but also to *the whole Church*. It contains the history of the founding of the kingdom of God, and the prophetic glances into the future of that kingdom. It begins with the book of Beginnings, the first book of Moses, with the account of the first things in the kingdom of nature, the first things in the kingdom of sin, the first things in the kingdom of the world and culture, but also the first things in the kingdom of grace and of redemption. And it closes with the book of the Last Things, the revelation of John, with the last struggles between God's kingdom and the hostile world-powers, the last conclusion of peace on earth, the new heaven and the new earth. Edifying contemplation must direct its glance to the beginning and the end, in order rightly to understand the middle. The revelation of God in Christ constitutes the centre of Scripture and of Christian contemplation. And as the Christian sermon in the congregation is not only to proclaim Christ as Him who *has been*, but as Him who *is*, invisibly present in the course of the ages, and in His Church; so also the believing reading of the Holy Scripture must view the word and the facts of Holy Scripture not only in their past meaning, but also in their permanent meaning and application. This application of the word is to be, indeed, an application to ourselves, and edifying contemplation must be self-contemplation in the light of the word of God. Every Christian who in faith surrenders to God's word, must use that word, as well heard as read, so that the man of God in him may become perfect, "fitted for every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 17). But as the individual only stands in relation to Christ, so far as he likewise is also a *member* of Christ's kingdom, the way of contemplation leads from self-contemplation to world-contemplation in the light of the divine word, or, what is the same thing, to the contemplation of the kingdom of God in the course of the ages. However urgently Christ summons to self-examination and self-knowledge, he yet constantly leads the disciples into the contemplation of God's kingdom, after its relation to the race. And however earnestly we, after the example of the Lord, press self-exami-

nation, we must yet no less emphasize that if one makes self-inspection the only task of contemplation, or will *only* apply the word of God to himself, this is a most one-sided use of God's word, whereby one in a great degree weakens also its right and full application even to ourselves. From a one-sided ascetic standpoint it has been indeed maintained, that one has *no time* to engage in other contemplations about divine things than those immediately concerning himself and his own salvation, so that thus one will only seek in the Scripture and consider what belongs to the order of salvation, what relates to conversion, justification and sanctification. But he who so speaks and thinks must overlook entire and large leading passages in God's word, and in the Lord's own discourses. He dare, for instance, have no time to tarry by the Lord's parables, as by the parable of the grain of mustard seed that grows up into a great tree, in whose branches the birds build their nests, of the leaven, of the tares among the wheat, of the servants sent out who come to receive the fruit of the vineyard,—parables that give a concentrated picture of world-history and of the history of God's kingdom; or at least he will exclusively apply them to his own soul, to the individual, mutilating them, and robbing them of their full value. As little will he find time to hear the Lord's prophetic discourses of the destruction of Jerusalem and the last day, His discourses of the signs of the times and the signs of His second coming or appearance on earth, of the different behaviour of the peoples to God's kingdom, of the rejection of Israel and his restoration in the last times, of the fulness (the full number) of the heathen and their ingathering, not to speak of having time to tarry by those great visions which are spread out in the Revelation of John, or the corresponding portions of the apostolic epistles, before our view. He will also have no time to go closely into the circumstances of the Church in the apostolic age, as they are set forth in the Acts and the epistles of the apostles. From all we have mentioned he will at most snatch single sayings and sentences, that he may apply them immediately to himself. This exclusive and artificial self-contemplation,—artificial because it is only brought about by an arbitrary, forced disregard of the word of God in its entirety and connected fulness,—

leads to a morbid state. Now it appears as a sullen brooding about himself and his own sinfulness, while one microscopically traces every movement of the soul, constantly feeling his own pulse ; now as a vain self-contemplation, the individual finding himself excellent, just because he understands how to observe himself. But thus it ought not to be: self-contemplation, regard to the single personality, one must be able to unite with a *healthy self-forgetfulness*, a surrender to the object, in which this respect, this care for ourselves, does not indeed absolutely perish, but for the time is, as it were, set at rest, to be afterwards the more thoroughly taken up again.

As the Reformation was called to insist on inwardness, and especially to emphasize the order of salvation, or the way of salvation for the individual, it often happened—although not at all as a necessary consequence of the *principle*, rightly understood—that regard to the individual was urged at the cost of the kingdom of God. If we regard the tendency of Protestant preaching still in many places predominant, such an application of the gospel to the individual often meets us, that the full contents of the gospel do not get justice. The evangelical Christians of our days are in a high degree needing to be led into a living contemplation of sacred history, of the history of Christ and the apostles, and that in their connection with the history of Israel, as a pre-representation of the leadings of the Christian Church, its sufferings, trials, and final glorification. But with the consideration of Biblical history there must also be combined profound study of the prophetic word, the word of prediction partly set forth in the Old, partly in the New Testament, which is in progressive fulfilment in the history of the peoples throughout all ages. And a Christian can only then rightly understand his own guidance when he views it in connection with the guidance of God's kingdom ; for God has interwoven the guidance of the individual with the guidance of His kingdom, the education of the individual with the education of the race. The individual is only a citizen, a member of the whole kingdom, and can therefore also only become perfected with the whole people of God on earth. And so also it certainly falls not only to theologians to give heed to the destinies and the situation of God's people on earth, but that is the concern of the whole

Church. Precisely in our days the state of the world and world-events in a high degree summon us to bestow the greatest attention on the teachings of Scripture about God's kingdom in its position to the world.

But from self-contemplation, as from the contemplation of the world and the kingdom, we are ever again led back to Him in whom lie hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3), and who of God is made to us wisdom, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). A Christian must endeavour to gain a spiritual image of his Saviour, not a self-made image, but one in which, by means of the word, the Lord Himself may be formed in him (Gal. iv. 19; 2 Cor. iii. 18). He who reads our four gospels with sense and spirit will observe the most admirable harmony in them. He will find no other Christ in John than in the first evangelists. Doubtless, however, he will in the Gospel of John see Christ not merely after His relation to the world of men, in which He will plant His kingdom, but also after His inner eternal relation to the Father, will here find the great testimonies in which He has borne witness of Himself, and the promises given to His people of the Comforter who should glorify Him. What John has thus apprehended and reproduced is the side of Christ's divine-human being turned to eternity and the eternal depths. But when in Matthew also, chap. xi. 25-27, the Lord expresses Himself in the frame of prayer and contemplation, we hear quite the same tones as in John. The Gospel of John may be viewed as a clearly executed representation of that word of the Lord which Matthew has preserved to us: "All things are delivered unto me by my Father. And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

### § 73.

The feelings which are combined with contemplative love, and which we should nourish and develop in us amid our consideration of the divine word, are indeed many and manifold; but we have here to mention especially two chief feelings, namely, an unbounded *thankfulness* and an un-

bounded *admiration*. Whatever way contemplation may take, it is always brought back to what God has *given* us, to the riches of His grace, His mercy. And whatever feelings of sadness and sorrow, whatever grief of heart at sin's power may be awakened by contemplation, yet the main evangelical feeling remains an unbounded thankfulness for God's unfathomable grace and mercy to us: "Let us love Him, for He has first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). But most closely connected with this is the unbounded adoring admiration of the perfections of His being, as these are revealed in His wonderful works, not only in the miracle of creation, but especially in the miracle of the new creation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Rom. xi. 33, 36). Both the feelings mentioned are closely akin; but in thankfulness the thought of one's own soul, the thought of personal salvation asserts itself, while this momentarily disappears in the feeling of admiration, in self-forgetfulness at the radiance of God's glory. It is a one-sidedness when this relation is so conceived, as if the one of these feelings excluded the other, although such a one-sidedness has at times appeared in the Church.<sup>1</sup> But were we to name such examples of contemplation as present both elements in the most perfect union and mutual penetration, we would especially point to the form of contemplation appearing in the Apostle John. His contemplation goes back to the "beginning," when neither world nor time was, when only "the Word" was with God and was God Himself. It leads us into the mystery of the creation and of the incarnation, to the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. In the peace of eternity, and as from the height of eternity, He looks down on the earthly existence, with its opposition of light and darkness, the opposition between the Father and the world, between Christ and the prince of this world, between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. His prophetic eagle glance embraces future times, and reaches to the end, when the last great victory is gained, when time shall be no more, but only eternity. But just in this love of adoring

<sup>1</sup> Compare General Part (2d German edition), p. 210 ff.



admiration, in which the apostle with unconditional surrender stands towards his object, while his soul is comparable to a living mirror, the disciple who at the Supper rested on the Redeemer's breast, utters this voice, "Let us love Him, because He first loved us;" "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). In Paul also we find adoration and thankfulness in most intimate union, only that contemplation appears with him in another form, namely, united with reflection, the dialectic activity, whereby he affords us a deep insight into sin and grace, as these are revealed in the life of the individual, as well as also in the joint life of the race. These are the two apostles to whom are to be traced the beginnings and roots of all knowledge, of all speculation in the Church.

#### § 74.

The perfection of contemplation depends partly on its *inwardness* and depth, an unweariedly renewed recurrence to the same starting-point and centre, partly on its compass, while not merely the kingdom of grace, but also the kingdom of nature in its relation to grace, must become the object of Christian contemplation, in harmony with the apostolic word, "All things are yours" (1 Cor. iii. 21). In the first place, namely, as regards the inwardness of contemplation, great examples meet us in the mystics. How unweariedly, with what indestructible freshness, can a Tauler (born 1294, died 1361), and the whole chorus of his quiet spiritual kindred, move in the same circle of some great thoughts that have risen upon them! How they can, like divers, descend into the depth, ever anew to fetch up out of it the same pearls, in which they every time rejoice again with the first joy of discovery! The repetition that here occurs is not reminiscence, but the repetition of life itself, and of the ever renewed life-process. Yet it is, above all, the *word of Scripture* itself that we must revolve within us. Of all words, none require diligent repetition in such measure as the words of eternal life, and there is also no other that can in like measure bear it. For they never become antiquated, bypast

words, but remain ever fresh and present, simply because they are *supra-temporal*, and can therefore at every time and in every temporal relation prove their power—a power that frees from time, and raises above time, while merely human wisdom very soon becomes bypast, antiquated, and ineffectual.

As regards the compass of contemplation, this grows in completeness and fulness the more it understands and is able to embrace of the truths of revelation, as also of the application thereof to life, and to the manifold phenomena of the world. Yet in this a danger threatens, of which warning must be given. Precisely in our time, which beyond others suffers from the desire of the phenomenal, there is a widespread tendency, as well in a religious as in a worldly direction, to enlarge the compass of contemplation at the expense of inwardness, in the many and manifold to forget the unit, in the multitude of objects to lose the centre of consciousness. However weighty it may be to place the unit in relation to the manifoldness of being, a problem which we have also set ourselves, yet let it not be forgotten that when we are speaking of edification it remains, above all, the unit that it concerns; and that for our edification, our spiritual progress, we need at bottom only some few but great truths, which we must live into again and again. Therefore the problem does not consist in drawing the greatest possible multiplicity into the sphere of our contemplation, greater than one is able to control, and especially to put in relation to the unit, as it is also needful in enriching our knowledge not to dissipate and lose ourselves in unfruitful Martha-labour. Even the old Oetinger (1702–82) complains that there are many whose contemplation loses itself in a too great multitude and multiplicity of objects, and who pursue a too subtle insight into things, by which the eyes become ever more lustful and immoderate to see novelties again and again, while often, however, overlooking the most needful thing of all. He thus lays down the rule, that he who loves wisdom must first and foremost pray God for wisdom to know what knowledge is the most necessary and fruitful, (1) for himself, his special relations and his peculiar nature; (2) for the period of time in which we are born.<sup>1</sup> This rule we can

<sup>1</sup> Auberlen, *Oetinger's Theosophie*, p. 391.

appropriate in every respect. As regards especially the present time and its importance, we will become always the more aware that the word of God wonders at none of the things that astonish the world, that to this word there is nothing new under the sun. In the measure that we have become familiar with the prophetic view of the world, in the same measure we hover, as regards the great chief questions that concern every Christian—especially the position that the kingdom of God occupies to the world—above the time, are before the time, and acquainted with the time, as the word of eternity teaches us to understand the signs of the time.

### § 75.

Contemplative intercourse with God points back to intercourse of heart with God, and therewith to mystical communion with Him, a communion not in mere thoughts, but in life and in personal existence. Essentially this communion is already present in living faith. But the further development of this mystical communion is only accomplished when contemplation and meditation develop into *prayer*; and as it is prayer by which in practical life the blessing is conditioned, the same is also the condition of all blessing in the contemplative life. Where prayer grows dumb, there also will the inner springs of adoring admiration and of pious thankfulness grow dry; and then contemplation will also wither, and as a mere image of thought and fancy stand before us, given over to doubt and to the lower worldly consciousness, which insists on its realities, and that with the appearance of a far greater validity and certainty than those of faith. Or else—namely, in the case that in more deeply endowed natures, contemplation, despite the lack of prayer, preserves its freshness—there arises a dangerous security, a mere imagined Christianity, men thinking that they have life in God while they live in the imagination of it. In this respect it is natural to recall to mind the history of the development of John Tauler, that enlightened Dominican preacher at Cologne and Strassburg. He who had already for many a year preached the gospel to every one's admiration, and believed that he himself was a true Christian, but to whom a Christian layman, who had

come from a great distance, spoke in a friendly awakening and hortatory way about his preaching and his personal spiritual state,—he was convinced by this simple address that he had hitherto only possessed the figure, the form of Christianity, but not the essence of it; that he was still in the letter and not in the spirit. We cannot here more fully describe how in that man the spiritual life broke forth by means of great internal conflicts, and he now first became fit to preach with demonstration of the Spirit and of power, and to produce truly sanctifying effects in the heart. But what the foresaid remarkable narrative has chiefly to say to us is, that in that earlier time Tauler stood only in the contemplative relation to God. He then took life in the highest thoughts for life with God Himself. He *thought* God indeed, but was not yet in the true and full import of the word a child of God. The deeply internal, genuinely mystical position to God, the true life of prayer and experience, he had not yet discovered. Contemplation must pass through the school of prayer and experience to gain the right life; while, on the other hand, it must be said that by true contemplation prayer is anew awakened and nourished. There occurs here a relation of uninterrupted reciprocity and mutual action.

## MYSTICAL LOVE.

*Prayer.—The Lord's Supper.*

## § 76.

Mystical love arises from the longing that the Psalmist expresses in the words, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God," from the consciousness, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Now this, that one not only has God in his thoughts, but in his existence and as a fact, is no doubt already to be found in the Christian faith. But as the Christian life simply moves between the two poles, having and not having, it ever anew seeks immediate union, immediate communion of life with God, the direct relation, a holy meeting of the soul

with the eternal love, in order by it to be strengthened and confirmed in the inner man. When we designate the mystical union as the immediate, we would by this in no way hold every "means" excluded, as the false mysticism does; for the means of grace are not excluded. The constantly renewed and repeated union with the living, present God, takes place in *prayer* and in the *sacrament*. In prayer we speak with God ("the converse of the soul"), pour out our heart before Him, thank and praise Him as those who have Him, call on and entreat Him as those who have Him not; and the inmost truth of our personality opens and unfolds itself before His face. Prayer, therefore, is not at all, as it is often regarded, a mere means for something else, that one would thereby gain or would strengthen and enliven, as, for instance, any activity; but it is love itself in its living expression. One form only of union with God and the Saviour is still more intimate, still higher and deeper than in prayer, namely, the sacramental union in the Lord's Supper, as the holy of holies of our faith, where the Lord Christ Himself communicates to us His body and His blood. But this sacrament itself must be partaken of in a prayerful frame. And prayer has also been given us by our Lord as a means of grace, which we are to use along with the other means of grace, and which we can always have with us. He has given the greatest promises to prayer (Luke xi. 9-13), has granted us the right to pray in His name (John xvi. 23); and, finally, has put into our lips the fundamental and choice word of prayer in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 9 ff.).

Christian prayer is prayer to God through Christ. It is prayer to our Father in heaven; yet our prayer does not go to the Father in such sense as if the Son and the Holy Spirit were excluded, as if it dared not apply to them. To the Son also we may and ought to pray, as we ought also to call upon the Holy Spirit; and the Church has ever, yea from its beginning, done both. But though one or the other of the persons is preponderantly present to the consciousness or the imagination, it still remains the three-one God to whom prayer is addressed. But our prayer is ever made *by means* of Christ the Mediator, so that we must say with Augustine: We pray to Him, through Him, in Him.



## § 77.

In prayer the profoundest act of conscience and obedience is inwardly accomplished, for prayer is only in so far a laying hold and appropriation of God, as it is likewise a *sacrifice*; and we can only receive God into us, when we likewise give ourselves to Him. He who offers no sacrifice in his prayer, who does not sacrifice his self-will, does not really pray. But this sacrifice of surrender and obedience is only true and pure when it is the sacrifice of free love, when under it the position of the servant is transformed into that of the child. By such a sacrifice, in which self-will dies, room is gained within for God the Lord, whose place within us is otherwise occupied by the selfish desires, the world and its images. But no one is at the very first perfect in prayer. Prayer can only have in us a really developed history, by continued resistance to all that opposes prayer, and by continued education of the gift of prayer bestowed on us. For in this also that word holds good, "To him that hath shall be given" (Matt. xxv. 29).

## § 78.

If we now inquire whereby, then, our prayers are hindered, we must mention *doubt* of the power of prayer as the first hindrance; wherefore also an apostle says, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (Jas. i. 6). There is a mode of representation which, under the appearance of philosophic wisdom, would choke prayer, namely, that our words and wishes cannot possibly influence God's government of the world, as everything happens as it has been determined in God's purpose, whether we pray or not. This, however, is a reasoning that overthrows the conception of the moral order of the world; for, according to this, it must be said that human actions altogether, our co-operation with the will of God, or else our counterworking of His will, do not exercise the slightest influence on the divine government of the world. But wherever a moral government of the world is acknowledged, it must be likewise acknowledged that the divine purpose is no fate, no inflexible allotment, but a purpose

which in its execution is *conditioned* by the free actions of men, a presupposition without which the conceptions of imputation and responsibility, of being lost and saved, of judgment and mercy, of faith and conversion, would be without all sense and meaning. But of the human actions, the free acts of men, by which the divine purpose is self-conditioned, and which it has ordained as conditions for the development of God's kingdom in the human race, prayer also is one. And no one who is acquainted with the course of development of God's kingdom will have any difficulty in calling prayer one of the greatest world-moving powers that have co-operated towards the most far-reaching changes on earth. And not only does he who prays himself become another man through prayer, another than he was before, but by his becoming another his surroundings and external relations become more or less changed. Should it be said that this holds good only of the moral and spiritual relations, that prayer is no doubt a power in the moral order of the world, but is of no avail also to produce changes in the natural, physical order of things, which simply follow their own unchangeable laws, we would ask, Is there not, then, a secret connection between the moral and physical order of things? Appeal is made to an unchangeable connection of nature which cannot be invaded. We understand this objection when it proceeds from pantheists and materialists, whose God is nature itself, but do not understand it in the mouth of those who confess a living God, the Creator, who helps and delivers. If God be not an idle spectator beside the eternal revolution of nature, but rather the living, willing, acting God, whose world-plan is no other than His holy kingdom, then nature is merely the *organ* of His will; then not only must influences be able to proceed from this God-ordained connection of finite causes, to each of created things, but also *direct influences from the centre*, which is just the presupposition of the miracle, as also of prayer; then God must be able not merely to stand in communication with the single creature by means of this great connection of nature, but also to put Himself into a direct relation to every single member within this connection, since every single creature must have an open, accessible side for the influence of the Creator

Where faith in the living God exists, it is also believed that He can even now send to him that prays not only spiritual, but also bodily help, can rescue from the abyss of death, in the government and ordering of human destiny can make stormy winds His messengers, flames of fire His servants; for if He could not, had He exhausted all his possibilities in this connection of nature, He were not the God of omnipotence and of grace. But as we cannot survey the ways by which the Lord would lead us, our prayers for temporal benefits and aids must no doubt ever be regulated after the typical prayer of the Lord: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." On the other hand, we know that we ought always to pray—for God Himself, for the Holy Spirit, as we also know that the Holy Spirit does not make His abode in us except we pray for it. A Christian must therefore ever pray also for prayer itself, that we may pray aright; must, with the disciples, entreat the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke xvii. 5).

But even when we pray in faith, certain hindrances remain to be combated; and the more earnestly we pray, the more must we also *strive* in prayer. An innate indolence and sloth belongs to our corrupt nature, a law of gravity, that would ever drag us down to the earth, and hinder the soul from soaring. Mists are without intermission arising from our sinful flesh, which hide the sun from our inner eye. The sun stands with its usual brightness in the heaven; but it is our earthly atmosphere that hides it from us. Prayer thus must show itself as earnest will, as an act of freedom that penetrates and tears asunder the mist. But, that we may conquer in this, it will at the same time be indispensable for us so to arrange our whole mode of life that the life of prayer suffer no hindrance by it. The same Saviour who has made it our duty to pray, says also, "Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness" (Luke xxi. 34). Every preponderance of the flesh over the spirit, every sinking of the spirit into the life of nature, every surrender to the dominion of matter, hinders prayer, which just depends upon this, that the spirit tears itself free from the pressure and service of matter, that it raises itself aloft into the pure and light air of eternity. When we consider this, we also understand the connection that has been assumed from of old

between prayer and *fasting*. By fasting, in the wider meaning of the word, we understand free abstinence even from that satisfaction of the senses that is in itself lawful; for, that a man may gain the requisite power to resist unlawful gratification, he must often renounce what is lawful. However much that is erroneous and perverted has been combined with this,—for by an *undue* resistance to the senses, prayer and the spiritual life may also be hindered,—yet it is sure that between the power to pray and the ability to control one's sensual impulses there exists a connection, and that if the control of our senses is a condition for the religious life as a whole, this holds true especially of prayer and the sacrament. The dominion of the life of prayer and the dominion of the lower senses always stand in inverse relation to each other. Experience teaches us that in those times of fasting which are ordained to men by divine guidance, in times of need, of trouble, of want, we men pray best; and the extraordinary (the ecstatic) states of prayer ever imply a certain being "out of the body" (2 Cor. xii. 2 ff.).

With that in our nature which yields to the law of gravity, is closely connected another hindrance, namely, *distraction*. Distraction is the opposite of internal collectedness. Where the former prevails, the soul is ruled by its own accidental ideas, that draw it in different directions, and involve it in accidental reflections. At all times, pious praying ones have lamented this temptation in prayer. The holy Bernard (1091–1153) and Luther both complained that at times it was impossible for them to pray a single paternoster without distraction.

Severance from that tendency of our nature which follows the law of gravity, and collectedness of the spirit, is thus the first thing to be striven for in prayer. But when these hindrances are happily overcome, then begins the main struggle, namely, the struggle in which we are to sacrifice our own will to God, that God may for this give us His Holy Spirit. He who will not war such a warfare, but in prayer itself will hold fast his passions, his anger, his selfish desires; who in prayer does not pray *against* himself, has not the will and the mind to give himself over fully and without reserve to the will of God, will, despite all his calling and crying, not

attain to union with God in prayer. For God's Spirit cannot erect His temple beside the idols' temples present in such a soul, but will only build His temple on the ruins of the idols' temples. And here it appears in what connection prayer stands to the whole of life besides, in that only he who strives to make his whole life a sacrifice well pleasing to God is fit also for the holy sacrifice of prayer. "That your prayers be not hindered," says the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. iii. 7), where he utters a moral exhortation. That we may be fitted for prayer, we must lay aside our faults, combat our sins, and again we must pray in order to become fitted to renounce our sins. Thus a reciprocal action here occurs.

But not only with ourselves is it important to strive in prayer. It may also be the case that we strive in prayer with God, contend against the opposition that God Himself furnishes by means of trials laid upon us. He lets His servants be tried in the furnace of temptations, withdraws from them the comfort of the Spirit, sometimes hides Himself from them, shuts, as it were, His heaven from them, that the constancy of their faith, the inwardness of their longing, may be put to the proof ("How long, O Lord?"). Thus under the Old Testament the patriarch Jacob was tried, when wrestling with God the Lord he exclaimed, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me" (Gen. xxxii. 26). So also the Canaanitish woman was tried, when at first her prayer was refused by the Lord with apparent harshness, till at last she received the comforting word, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. xv. 21 ff.).

### § 79.

Amid these struggles with the various hindrances, the gift of prayer is developed and formed, or the power to surrender entirely to God, and to draw His Spirit into us. But the cultivation of the gift of prayer dare not, any more than the gift of meditative contemplation, be left to accident, to become a mere affair of moods (of inclination or disinclination); for in that case prayer would far too often be omitted. It must become a problem to every Christian to educate himself for prayer, by subjecting prayer to a rule, a discipline. In the



life of a Christian there must be an order of prayer, appointed times of prayer; and it is a natural requirement that no day pass over without morning and evening sacrifice. True, it may be said that the praying frame must be *given* us; wherefore we must continue watchful, even amid the occupations and distractions of life, for the visitations of the Spirit and His calling voices. For the Spirit visits us far oftener, speaks far oftener within us, than we ourselves are aware of, because we do not give heed to it. But it may be maintained just as well that the praying frame must be *sought*; and for this we can give no better direction than that which Luther gives us in his *Simple Way to Pray*, from which in particular we quote the following words:—"When I feel that by strange business or thoughts I am become cold and disinclined to pray (as indeed the flesh and the devil always resist and hinder prayer), I take my little psalter, run into the closet, or when it is the day and the time, into the church to the congregation, and begin orally by myself to say the ten commandments, the creed, and as I have time, some sayings of Christ, of Paul, or Psalms, just as the children do. Therefore it is good that one let prayer be the first work in early morning and the last at night, and carefully guard against those false, treacherous thoughts that say, Wait a little, an hour hence I will pray; I must first see to this or that; for with such thoughts one gets from prayer into business, which then holds and surrounds one, so that there will be no prayer that day." "When now the heart is warmed by such oral converse, and has come to itself, kneel down, or stand with folded hands, and eyes to heaven, and say or think as shortly as thou canst:—

"Ah, heavenly Father, Thou dear God, I am an unworthy poor sinner, not worthy to lift up mine eyes or hands to Thee, or pray. But because Thou hast commanded us all to pray, and hast also promised to hear, and, moreover, hast taught us both the words and the way through Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, I come at this Thy command to obey Thee, and rely upon Thy gracious promise; and in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, I pray with all Thy holy Christians on earth, as He has taught me: Our Father, who art in heaven;" whereupon Luther gives a simple slight direction how one is to pray each single petition in the Lord's Prayer.

Next to this prayer, Luther often points to the Psalter (the Psalms of David), which he himself constantly used ; and in this he makes prominent a guide, a help to prayer, which the Christians of all ages have employed, the Holy Spirit teaching them to conceive and understand the prayers of the Old Testament in an evangelical manner. None of the books of the Old Testament has so passed into the mouth and heart of the Christian Church as the Psalter. For here we find the whole scale of the states and frames of prayer, from the darkest abysses of temptation, when the soul cries to the Lord from the depths, to the bliss of paradisaic joy. And as we so often cannot find the right word, the words are here given us that express what we would say ; we feel borne and raised by them as on wings. Good Christian hymns also, composed by such men and women as were themselves earnest in prayer, may in this be of service to us, and give us guidance as well how to pray as also how we should give thanks.

### § 80.

Prayer comes ever nearer to its perfection in proportion as it becomes a prayer *in the name of Jesus*. As such our prayer is made partly on the word of Jesus, partly in the power of Jesus ; and on this rests the *inwardness* of prayer, and likewise its *humility*, while the praying one relies not on himself, his own power or worthiness, but yields himself entirely to the Mediator, casts himself into His arms, only ventures to appear before God confiding in Him. And as the prayer which is offered at Jesus' word, it will also in particular obey that word of Jesus, that we ought always and without intermission to pray and *not to faint* (Luke xviii. 1). But as regards the contents, it will be a prayer in the cause of Jesus, the great cause of His kingdom, and for this the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) is and remains the typical prayer. In this prayer our Saviour has taught us that we should not pray as atomistic individuals, not "singly," but as *members* of human society, of the believing Church, of the kingdom ; by which, however, it is in no way excluded that each of us has His special worth and importance ordained by God Himself. And certainly even in this there lies a

great, a supporting and sustaining power, that we are praying the same prayer that the whole Christian Church of all confessions prays with and for us, in that we all pray for each other, as each one for himself. And each of the petitions embraces a depth of riches. When we pray through our Lord's prayer, the imperfection of our prayer very often lies in this, that we do not tarry enough at the single petitions, do not go deeply enough into the riches of the single petitions. It is, however, a prayer that affords room for the most various stages of ability and ripeness in praying. It can be prayed by the child as well as by the man of gray hairs, by the simplest as by an apostle who utters in it all that he has to pray for himself, and likewise for the Church of God on earth. Beyond this prayer we cannot go. For the three first petitions, "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," contain the goal of the longing and yearning not only of the individual heart, but also of the whole creation, a yearning which already receives here below the commencement of its fulfilment. The remaining petitions are about those means, bodily and spiritual means, which we need besides in this temporal state. The whole prayer embraces the history of the kingdom, along with the history of the individual Christian.

But although we thus pray in words that the Lord has placed upon our lips and within our heart, or which the Holy Spirit has prayed in Christendom, that by no means excludes but rather involves that we also pray with our own words; or that the prayer delivered to us by the Lord or the Church be *individualized* in us, corresponding to our special states and relations. The more inward prayer becomes, the more it becomes a matter of conscience, the more will individual self-knowledge, the personal consciousness and confession of sin, be manifested in prayer, while we not only in general confess our sinfulness before God's face, but also our own special sin, our special temptations, our special hindrances; while we likewise in prayer desire to learn what the special will of God is with us, as well regarding our inner life as our external life-relations, and we for the one as for the other desire His blessing. With an entirely peculiar importance this individualizing prayer comes forth in the

turning-points of life, in the crises of being, at great decisions; and if we would here again have great examples, we may again mention Luther, in the ardent, decisive struggles of whose life prayer so often poured forth from the inmost of his unique personality, although always on the foundation of the Lord's Prayer and His promises.

But while individualizing prayer is uttered in our own words, there are also states in the Christian life such that our feelings and frames can find no expression in words, as we know not how to pray as we ought. Then the Spirit helps our infirmity, and makes Himself known in groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26).

### § 81.

The more our heart's prayer is joined with thanks, the more it both begins and ends with thanksgiving, the more complete it is. And there is always ground for thanks, even in this, that we have a gracious God, whom we call Father, are permitted to invoke as our Father, and who will hear us, though He should not hear us at once.

Being *heard, essentially* consists for the individual soul in the mystical union with God, in which God gives us His Holy Spirit, and in which the Lord's words, such as John xiv. 23, are fulfilled: "I and the Father will come and make our abode with him." But now, if it be asked by what inner experiences it is to be known that this essential hearing has become ours, we can only mention the one great experience, namely, that we have been renewed and confirmed in God's saving grace. From the first, all who prayed in the name of Jesus have praised, as the chief experience of prayer, the becoming conscious of *the peace of God* which passeth all understanding, and combined with this the becoming conscious of a *higher communication of power*, a quickening power amid all our weakness. But as God's saving grace is likewise educative and disciplinary grace, the answer is not always granted us at once, or at every time. This very thing is part of the inner guidance of grace with us, that God also withdraws from us such inward experiences, withholds the consciousness, the feeling of grace, that we

may learn not only to strive in prayer, but also in prayer *to wait on God*. Besides, it is to be observed that the answer is now granted to us in a more immediate, and now again in a more mediate way, now as a blessed, specially rich and fruitful moment, now as a quiet blessing, unremarked and not remarkable in its entrance, but which makes itself known in the whole of our inner life, in that our entire spiritual condition becomes better under continued prayer, as by the respiration of a purer air, while it cannot be connected with any single thing. In this respect there is seen a difference of human individualities. Among the children of God there are those who stand nearer the divine centre than others, and in very many cases these are ungifted and simple souls. With them the answer often occurs in light, yea, clear-shining moments, and not only in respect of inner states of life, but also when they have prayed or interceded regarding these or those external things, and that often in the most surprising, wonderful way, so that the whole narrowness of the low naturalistic standpoint is needed in order to dispute such answers. In others, the more mediate (living in reflection) children of grace, who have to resist far greater hindrances, the answer appears also, as a rule, more mediate. Yet no sharp boundaries can here be drawn between the mediate and the immediate. But no prayer, when it is earnest, remains without an answer.

But so far as we make a difference between the answer that is received in single bright moments, and that which, amid continued prayer, is experienced as an unnoticed blessing penetrating the whole of our life, the consideration is here forced upon us, that there are spiritual gifts which from their nature God cannot possibly grant in a single moment. If we pray, for instance, as for the Holy Spirit's help generally, so especially for wisdom, or righteousness, or self-denial, for strength to be able to overcome certain temptations, we can no doubt receive a momentary answer, in so far as our prayer refers to a single difficult case, a single situation. So a glimpse of light, a sudden illumination, may be bestowed on the soul, of which within the natural life those creative moments of genius, as they sometimes come to the thinker, the poet, give us a type—an illumination by which we



recognise what is the best counsel for the present case, the true life-wisdom (Jas. i. 5). If again we pray, as in any case we ought, for wisdom, righteousness, self-denial, as *those virtues* that should permanently belong to our personality, should become proper elements of our character, these *cannot* be given to us at once. Ready-made virtues cannot fall down from heaven into our bosom. They must not only be wrought out, but above all *spring forth* from our personal communion with God. And in many cases this growth is conditioned by this, *that this our communion with God must itself first become riper and more complete*, more elevated, more potent, raised to a higher stage of development. Thou canst indeed obtain these virtues which thou desirest, that is, a higher grade of wisdom, of righteousness, and so on; but thy relation to God, thy life of faith, must first become more inward, more deeply centralized, thy faith and love firmer, thy surrender to the Lord more absolute and inward. Here also one may point to a type in the realm of nature. In nature God grants us the spring, not in such wise as suddenly to rain down from heaven flowers, foliage, and birds upon us; but by the position of the earth to the sun becoming different, that is, more advanced, or, as it may also be expressed, "the sun advances into the star-figures of the spring."<sup>1</sup> Even so is it in the realm of grace. We ourselves must get into a changed, an advanced position to the Sun of the spiritual world. Then the buds appear, the flowers burst forth, all grows and advances; nay, the flowers may, under continued blessing from above, and continued labour on our part, become fruits.

The last end and object of our prayers is not, then, this or that single gift, but the perfecting of our personal relation to God, or of our life in God ("He in us, and we in Him," the true Immanence). Precisely when the answer is denied us, our God would lead us to a higher stage. Even granted that thou must remind thyself again and again, "In this case one must be silent, one must wait," that one has often to wait long for the spring; yet continue to pray without ceasing; for amid persevering prayer thou art insensibly advancing, thou art imperceptibly approaching the sun, and at last the wintry state is over. "It must *still* become spring."

<sup>1</sup> Culmann, *Die christliche Ethik*, I. 177.

## § 82.

As we are bound to strive in prayer, and to persevere in it, we should also in prayer with thanksgiving *be satisfied with the grace of God* (2 Cor. xii. 9). But that is equivalent to being satisfied with His educative grace (Titus ii. 11 f.), that is, not to desire to escape from its school before the time. We are all of us children and beginners, and therefore we cannot require that God should treat us otherwise than as children and beginners, who cannot bear an unbroken *enjoyment* of His Spirit's gift, but must be educated even by the occasional absence and deprivation thereof. To be satisfied with the grace of God, further means to be satisfied with His *saving* grace, with this, that one is a child of God, and therefore not to desire in prayer the *extraordinary* gifts of God's grace. For as Christian *humility* is tantamount to the feeling of our unworthiness, and to the persevering desire for the one thing needful, as humility shows itself in this, that we would be nothing but that to which God has once appointed us, and therefore only desire the gifts that are needful and conducive thereto; so also the humility of prayer must be shown in this, that all vain longing for the extraordinary gifts of grace, and the first places in the kingdom of God, is excluded. Our Lord has not only warned us of the pride of that Pharisee who in prayer thanked God that he was not like other men, or even as this publican. He has, besides, warned us against ambition, which often occurs in believing disciples, who desire that God would give them a prominent position before others. The sons of Zebedee (Mark x. 35 ff.), who entreat the Lord, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory," receive a correction ("Ye know not what ye ask," and so on), to which the Lord adds the words, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but (only to those shall it be given) for whom it is prepared by my Father." And with this our Lord has, once for all, rejected all vain fantastically ambitious prayers, although that ambition may give itself out as a holy ambition. But the exhortation here contained, to be satisfied with God's grace, is specially applicable also to a longing often appearing in

the course of Church history, namely, for signs and wonders, as a fruit of prayer (that is, for surprising, as it were tangible, answers to prayer), or for raptures, visions, and revelations in prayer. It is applicable to religious voluptuousness, to religious eudemonism, which is always merely longing to have blessed experiences in prayer, to receive lively impressions and feelings of the sweetness of God's love, like a lover who every moment desires new tokens of love, new proofs, new assurances that he is really loved, without considering that it belongs to the very essence of true love to believe in love even when no special signs of it appear; nay, when *seeming* signs of the opposite occur.

Among the moderns we may, in this connection, especially quote Lavater (1741-99). If we cannot avoid blaming in this man a false pursuit of signs and wonders, and that as effects of prayer, yet we by no means forget what is great, not to be forgotten, and permanent in his testimony and his activity. We would only point out a wrong way into which he got. Lavater thought that the same extraordinary gifts of grace of which the Christians of the apostolic time were partakers, appearances of the risen Christ, the gift of working miracles, of speaking with tongues, must also be bestowed on us, if we only rightly applied the means thereof, namely *prayer*. "What men who lived before us have been able to do," said he, "must also be in our power." His lack of right Church-historical consciousness prevented him from recognising that God's economy embraces different periods; and although personally, in the noblest sense of the word, a man of faith, of hope and love, he did not sufficiently consider that these three are the chief of all the gifts of grace, and appointed to remain in the Church at *all* times; while God only bestows the extraordinary gifts in extraordinary times. His tendency to signs and wonders brought on him, not without reason, the reproach of fantastic fanaticism. We will only refer to one point which had the greatest significance to Lavater and his friends, namely, their expectation that the Apostle John would reveal himself to them. That word of Christ to Peter and John (John xxi. 22), "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" was, that is to say, misunderstood by Lavater, as if the Apostle John were destined to live on upon

the earth till the return of the Lord, and accordingly were also still living in secret on the earth. Lavater hoped most assuredly that the Lord would yet fulfil his ardent prayer for a meeting with the "apostle of love;" and it is hardly possible to withhold a sad smile, when we see how this pure, truly noble man, in his walks, fixed his eyes now upon this passer-by, now upon that, if he might not possibly recognise the Apostle John in him, if perhaps the hour of fulfilment might now strike, and the long-deserved meeting might be granted to him. Under many forms, the same longing for signs and wonders recurred in him for blessed enjoyments of a heavenly sort. He suffered an unquenchable thirst for "experience of Christ." To his friends he secretly confided that he felt the need of a far greater certainty than he possessed, that he might glorify Christ before his brethren. He prayed that Christ would appear to him as He formerly had appeared to Saul on the way to Damascus, or else reveal Himself as He had revealed Himself to the unbelieving Thomas. He carried about this hope with him quite confidently, and wrote to his friends, "My gray hairs shall not go down to the grave before I have called to certain elect souls: He is far more certain than I myself." Lavater, then, was not content with the fellowship in which he stood with the invisible Christ, by means of the word and sacraments, nor with the testimony of God's Spirit in his heart. He desired a far more real, tangible, sensible, perceptible, visible experience of Christ. Many a time he believed he was already experiencing something of the highest enjoyment of soul, and then exulted in a paradisiacal feeling of delight; but these moments gave place again to sad and empty hours, when we hear him break out in heartrending complaints about the unsatisfied longing of his soul.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental error in Lavater's mysticism is the same as in all mysticism, namely, that he would anticipate within this life the perfect state of the future, would forestall it, that he would have, even here below, where we walk by faith, not by sight, that more real experience for which he thirsted.

<sup>1</sup> Gelzer, *Deutsche Nationalliteratur*, II. 97 ff. *Protestantische Monatsblätter*, XIV. 169 ff.: *Lavaters und seiner Freunde Verkehr mit der Geisterwelt I. Die Geisterseher in Kopenhagen.*

Not as though we would deny the possibility of such anticipations at all, as the Apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unutterable words, without knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body (2 Cor. xii. 2, 3). But the mistake consists in going after such states, in making much of them, in *seeking* such things with impatient haste, in *not being satisfied* with the ordinary and general gifts of grace. We may say, then, that Lavater's mystical love to God in this respect was an importunate love, that was not content with the great chief assurance of His love which God bestowed on him, as on all His people, in justifying faith; was not content with the many demonstrations that God gave him in the testimony of His Spirit, as well for comfort as for exhortation; nor with the many signs which come to view without a break in the course of the world's history, as in the ordinary progress of human life, and which, to the healthy eye of the spirit, serve as witnesses of the truth of the gospel. This importunate love, that requires more than God will give, and claims an intercourse with God that God will not grant, because the man is not ripe for it, is founded on a secret, an unconscious disobedience, that will not subordinate itself to God's educative and disciplinary grace; on the desire to be before the time emancipated from the divine discipline and school. In this school we are, as Luther repeatedly impresses upon us, to learn to hold fast to prayer and to the answer of prayer, independent of the changing states, as they make themselves known in our feelings and sensations. Faith in the bare word of God (the "As it is written"), without any feeling and sensation, is to be the proof of the inwardness of our fidelity and love.

### § 83.

This false anticipation of the perfection of the future life is also found in Fenelon, while he incorporates with the life of prayer that which he calls the "pure disinterested love." In Fenelon, however, it appears in a tendency which is opposed to that of Lavater. The latter desires in prayer an enjoyment of soul, desires signs and wonders, desires, that is, too much of God for this present temporal state; Fenelon, again, desires too little, will introduce a false *resignation* into prayer, yea,



even a renunciation of the motive of bliss, in order, by means of *this resignation*, to attain even in the present life to the highest, the perfect union with God, which certainly may likewise be called desiring too much. In its root, Fenelon's doctrine of pure love is connected with quietism, which, among other things, teaches that the perfect only pray the one petition, Thy will be done; while the *whole* Lord's Prayer is only prayed by those that occupy the lower stage. In the renunciation of the whole Lord's Prayer there lies a hidden pride. For so long as the name of God is still desecrated in so many ways, so long as, even in our own hearts, idolatry is by no means rooted out in every, even the subtlest form; so long as the kingdom of God has not yet come in its perfection, and we are surrounded by earthly need, by temptation, and sin, and guilt, so long we also need to pray the whole Lord's Prayer. He who imagines he does not need this, must think he is raised above sin, guilt, and all the needs of earth. The self-deception is also shown in this, that the adherents of quietism think they can come into a state of rest and peace through a single energetic act of will, *which needs no repetition*, —a state that will be disturbed by no contest more, a fanaticism, against which Bossuet justly urged that undisturbed love can only dwell in the future life, while in this life love is very much troubled and disturbed by sin, and that therefore for a Christian nothing is more important than to renew the acts of the inner life, and of the life of prayer. He points to this, that Christ, the Sinless One, during this temporal existence, had to renew the act of prayer, and that He prayed thrice in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but Thine be done;" and that Paul, in his temptation, prayed three times that the Lord would take from him the thorn in his flesh.

Both the one-sidednesses described are false anticipations of the perfection of the future life, and should serve to warn us against the impatience that would already seize here below what is only to be given us above; and so would prematurely escape from the school of this earthly life. We are not to pray to God for something that were *too much* for us in our present state of sinfulness, whether we are thinking in this of visions and revelations from the other world, or of perfect rest in God, disturbed by no struggles; or, in general, of extra-

ordinary signs of God's grace, which, however, are only given to those that do not pursue them. But, on the other hand, we ought also not to cease to pray to God for that which is most necessary to us all, and which we daily need in this existence. It will always appear that, when in one respect we pray for too much, we in another respect ask too little; and it will always be open to ask whether one who, for instance, prays for visions, appearances, special revelations, does not neglect to pray from the bottom of his heart, "Lead us not into temptation." God's educative grace, which has bound us to the means of grace appointed by the Lord, of which we have need till the last hour of our life—that must be enough for us. This grace will, by means of prayer, as well for spiritual as for bodily things, give us all that we need in this temporal state. And if we surrender ourselves to it in humility and obedience, it will prove itself to us again and again as that which is mighty to do and to give far above what we can ask or think.

What we have here said of prayer applies also to our *intercessions*, which we have to offer to God for our neighbours, for the Church, and for all men. The best that we can pray for each other is embraced in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." The meaning and power of intercession lies in this, that we are all members of the same spiritual body, all revolve round the same centre, and in mystical love, in believing prayer, have with each other a true fellowship of life, can evoke essential influences the one on the other, and that not only by means of the finite connection of nature, but by means of the divine centre itself.

#### § 84.

As in individual or private worship, public worship must find its echo, so again all private worship must lead back to public, to common prayer, and to that which forms the summit of the Christian life, namely *the Lord's Supper*,—the highest that anywhere can be appropriated (assimilated) by us. For all that Christ has done and suffered for us, all that He has been and continually will be for us, all His promises to His Church, are here imparted to us, and that concentrated into a single

moment. It is surely something unutterably great, that in the Supper the Lord bestows on us His body and blood to confirm the *forgiveness of our sins*. This is the first thing that we seek in the Lord's Supper, and without this all the rest would not prove a blessing to us. But now we constantly confess in our apostolic confession of faith, not only belief in the forgiveness of sins, but also belief in the resurrection of the body and *eternal life*. Between this and the holy Supper there exists a deep connection. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54). In the Lord's Supper, however, there occurs a secret union between a holy mystery of the Spirit and a holy mystery of nature. The mystical communion with Christ, which in itself is only a psychopneumatic, here passes into the sacramental, spirit-bodily communion. For the whole undivided Christ gives Himself in the Lord's Supper as nourishment, not merely for the soul, but for the whole new man; and so, too, for the future man of the resurrection. That the Holy Scripture also puts the Supper in connection with the last things, is clear not only from the words of the apostle, "Ye do (that is, by means of this solemnity) show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26), but also from the words of the Lord Himself, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29); for however these words may in detail be expounded, they at any rate make known that the Supper is a fact-prophecy, a pre-representation and anticipation of that union with the Lord which shall one day take place in the kingdom of bliss; and not only of union with the Lord, but also of the deep communion of love and life, which in that blessed kingdom will bind believers to each other. For by means of the Supper believers are fused into one body, since they all, as the apostle says, "become partakers of the same bread" (1 Cor. x. 17).<sup>1</sup> Among all nations, eating in common, or the appropriation (assimilation) of the same meal, is held as a sign of a closer relation, a more intimate communion; nay, among the nations of antiquity we meet even with a presentiment that eating in common also brings us into a

<sup>1</sup> The Author's *Dogmatics*, § 265.

mysterious relation to each other.<sup>1</sup> But this is fulfilled in its deepest sense in the mystery of the Lord's Supper. In that Supper, which points back to baptism, we are not only renewed, and that in the most real manner, in communion with the Lord, in the covenant and state of grace, but also in communion with the Christian Church; and not merely with the local Church, not merely with our neighbours, husband and wife, parents and children, who are here more inwardly united with each other, but with the whole Christian congregation (Church) of the living and the dead; while we, by means of Christ, the true (essential) heavenly vine, are mysteriously united with the true congregation of the saints, not only on earth, but also in heaven. Therefore the Supper is most properly a congregational transaction; and although on thy sick-bed thou art severed from the visible congregation and must partake of the Supper alone, thou still partakest of it in the midst of the congregation.

### § 85.

But what, then, is the worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper? "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. xi. 29). We answer, that partaking is unworthy that occurs with an unbelieving, unholy mind, to which what is holy is indifferent, which makes no distinction between the sacred and the profane. Worthy, again, is the partaking that is entered upon and performed with a genuine heart's need, to be renewed, namely, in the communion of the Lord and of the believing congregation, the partaking that takes place in *repentance* and *faith*, with which an honest purpose (vow) is always united. Above all, we seek in the celebration of the Supper a sealing of the forgiveness of our sins, wherefore our fathers designated the resolve to go to the altar as the resolve that they would make their peace with their God, which meant, rightly understood, that they now anew obeyed the requirement, "Be ye reconciled unto God." Therefore a previous self-examination is necessary, that the consciousness of sin and guilt, with the godly

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Baader, "Sur l'Eucharistie," *Philos. Schriften*, I. 218.

sorrow of repentance, may be awakened within us, that we may rightly feel how urgently necessary it is to believe in the grace of God in Christ, and that genuine assurance of faith may awake in the heart. And then, it also belongs to the true partaking of the Supper that we do so not only prayerfully but also thankfully, thanking the Lord for all the blessings He has bestowed on us in the kingdom of nature and of grace, giving thanks for His wondrous love, which we do not merely think of as a love that formerly appeared, and so as past, but rather as still present; giving thanks for this, that even to this hour it will be present with us in its gifts. And if we require repentance (penitence) and faith, we would not thereby reject weak faith, or a faith such that only an imperfect insight or understanding dwells with it, so that the man cannot yet appropriate the mystery of this love in its entire depth—for who could do so?—or as yet possesses only a feebler conception of it. There are, as regards appropriation, very many steps. And were we to reject weak and imperfect faith, we would be in danger of rejecting also that word of the Lord, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37), and that, “He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax” (Matt. xii. 20). Nay, we even teach, according to our evangelical confession (Augsb. Conf. Art. 7), that the sacraments have been appointed in order to *awaken* and confirm faith in those that use them. Weak faith may simply by the partaking of the sacrament be made stronger, as by the repetition of it a progress may take place from the lower stage of appropriation to a higher. Thus, when we require repentance and faith, we do not require this or that stage of perfection of the inner life; for in regard to the inwardness of the need and of the longing of faith, in regard to what is praised in the communion hymn, “Jesus, to taste Thy sweet communion,” there is indeed a great difference of degree. But we do require absolute uprightness, inward truthfulness of sentiment.

And when we prepare ourselves for the sacrament of reconciliation, “in order to make our peace with God,” we should then likewise stir up our heart to make our peace with men, that is, awaken the placable spirit. To the right preparation there belongs not only the petition, “Forgive us our debts,”



but also that we from the heart add this other, "as we forgive our debtors." There are Christian families in which husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, mutually beg forgiveness and forgive each other, ere they partake together of the Lord's Supper. And if this do not always take place expressly and visibly, yet it must always take place in the mind and in secret.

### § 86.

If further inquiry is made of the experiences undergone as well during the believing partaking of the holy Supper as after it, we must most emphatically insist that the effect of the sacraments is not limited to the conscious life, but stretches into the unconscious domain of our being, that thus there is something in it that cannot become the object of psychological experience. Yet an immediate impression *may* no doubt be granted to us in the Supper of the peace of God in the communion of the Lord, a sensible renovation in love to the Lord and His Church, the immediate feeling of a purification that has taken place in us, a new strengthening for the toil and struggle of life. But we dare not measure the blessing of the Supper by our changing moods. Above all, we dare not require Lavater-like raptures. There may also continuously be states of inward drought, in which nothing is felt. Yet we must not therefore become wavering and uncertain. In all the Lord gives us to experience of His grace, or the experience of which He withdraws from us, He regards alone what may profit us for our final perfection. What is granted or refused us by Him in a single moment, the Lord places in relation to our guidance in life as a whole, to His all-embracing plan with us. One needs only to hold fast confidence in the word and work of the Lord. By partaking of the sacrament, there is always a seed planted in us, which will imperceptibly germinate and bear fruit, so far as that growth is not counterworked by sin and unbelief. If instead of the quiet joy on the day of the communion solemnity, there rather appears in many a certain unattunedness, an ill-humour, this phenomenon may in many cases be explained by this, that such people mainly live their life in

the element of worldliness, and therefore, although unconsciously, feel themselves oppressed by the contrast between that holy of holies and their accustomed thought and action, by which for the rest we do not at all mean an immoral life in the worldly sense. But if the Supper is indeed to prove a blessing and a quiet joy to us, it must be put in relation and connection with the other means of grace, and especially must be combined with a truly Christian life and effort, as the *acme* of which it then holds good, and so must never exist in our life as something *isolated*. If the celebration of the communion is to form the *acme*, for that very reason the other points and elements must not be left out of view.

And *how often* should we observe this solemnity? The answer can only be given individually, that is, from the standpoint of the individual personality. We must just assimilate no more than we are able afterwards spiritually to consume. Only the holy action must not be given over to accident. Rather must there, in respect of this spiritual enjoyment, occur a certain order and regularity, although there may always be extraordinary occasions to engage in the celebration. A too frequent partaking of the holy communion may no doubt lead to the weakening of the holy impression, and to our falling into an external state. In unusual and perilous times in the Church, for instance, in times of persecution, the more frequent use will naturally take place of itself. In the Apostolic Church the Supper was partaken of daily, and that in combination with the love-feasts (the *agapae*). But that time of the Church was indeed the most extraordinary of all, the time of signs and wonders, of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, of ecstatic states. The susceptibility for heavenly things was unusual; and with the abrupt opposition to the world and the antichristian powers, to heathenism and unbelieving Judaism, which indeed appeared to the little flock like mountains that faith had to remove, the believers needed the continuous and most elevated possible "communion" (fellowship) with the Redeemer exalted to heaven. But the thing is different in ordinary times of the Church, when the course of development of God's kingdom comes under the general and usual laws of historical events, when *all* the elements of the earthly existence of men are to be unfolded,

and when that immediate intercourse with heaven that immediate relation to the centre, can no longer take place in the same measure as in the time of miracles. In the ordinary ages of the Church, frequent communion may prove injurious, because the receptivity, the ability to assimilate, does not stand in a corresponding relation to it. This subject was handled in a specially instructive way in the controversy of the 17th century between the Jesuits and the Jansenists. The Jesuits recommended frequently repeated confession and communion, by which they furnished many worldlings with a convenient means of getting rid very often and ever anew of a guilty conscience, which they were ever afresh contracting. A Jesuit published a treatise on the question, whether it is better to communicate seldom or often, and declared for the last, at the same time viewing the matter quite externally and in a business way, while giving the advice to communicate every eighth day. In the world of rank there then prevailed a great levity, especially too in the partaking of the sacrament, as, for instance, with a Princess Guemené, who wanted, when on her way to a ball, and in her ball dress, to make her confession *en passant*, but was sent away by the priest concerned. Against this indecency, Pascal's friend, Arnauld, wrote his celebrated work, *De la fréquente communion*. Though we cannot enter upon his Catholic views, we must entirely agree with him, when he urges the point of view that the holy Supper requires the most earnest preparation, and that one dare not take it easy with this matter; that a certain reserve may here be of use, in order that our hunger may grow; nay, that in many there is found even an unhealthy kind of hunger.<sup>1</sup>

The present congregational conditions in our evangelical Church show not only a vast apostasy from the faith, but also the phenomenon that a great number of the baptized regularly partake indeed in the public services in order to hear the preaching of the word and the prayers of the Church, but partake of the Supper, it may be said, not at all. A Christianity of that sort we must designate as very incomplete, and missing the highest. We can only ask such Christians to examine themselves, whether — taking for

<sup>1</sup> Herzog, *Theol. Realencyclopädie*, I. Art. "Arnauld."

granted that they really believe on Christ, love Him, and wish *to remain in Him* as branches in the vine ("Abide in me, and I in you," John xv. 4)—whether they can answer for excommunicating themselves, excluding themselves from His testament of love. Christ says, "*Do this in remembrance of me;*" but does not say, "Only forget it, let it stand aside." We here set up no commandment, but limit ourselves in general to this declaration, that no Christian who yet, although in great imperfection, seeks to appropriate not merely a fragment of Christianity, but the whole of it, will let a church year elapse without following the loving desire, the hearty requirement of the Lord, without seeking communion with the Lord and His Church in His testament of love for his own soul also. The church year<sup>1</sup> that is given us within the course of the world's year, the world's time, as a year of grace, calls to us from beginning to end, "Keep Jesus Christ in memory," and offers us the means of grace, "Come, for all things are ready"—certainly not that these means should remain unused, but that they may be employed. As each section of the church year has its corresponding tone in the Christian life of faith, so the time of Easter is especially adapted for the celebration of the communion, which was even founded in the passion-week, "in the night when our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed." But as the risen Saviour is with us every day, with the peace of the forgiveness of sins and of eternal life, every point of time in the ecclesiastical year will harmonize with the temper of the communion, nay, will call it forth, provided the personal conditions are present.

<sup>1</sup> [This refers to the fact that in the Lutheran, as in some other churches, all the Lord's days of the year are connected with some great Christian fact or person, appropriate passages of Scripture being assigned for each day.—TRANS.]

## PRACTICAL LOVE.

*Devotion to the Ideal of God's Kingdom.—Philanthropy.*

## § 87.

As the love of Christ Himself was not only contemplative and adoring, but also active and suffering love, the same must also be shown as a copy by His followers. Practical love in following Christ is more closely defined as a ministering devotion to the ideal of God's kingdom, which is to be realized within the kingdom of humanity. While a Christian works for that, he likewise works for this object, himself to become a man "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28). Work for God's kingdom and that of humanity (of human life) can gain no definite form in the individual Christian otherwise than through personal devotion to a *calling* appointed by God. To the first disciples it was appointed primarily as the apostolical, the *missionary* activity. But within Christendom, which we here have in view, work may and should be done for the kingdom of God in every truly human calling. Every Christian must know how to unite his heavenly with his earthly (temporal) calling, which embraces the lively participation in the spread of God's kingdom, in its progress in all circles of human society.

All true disciples of Christ work for His kingdom in the prophetic glance of the *hope*, which in Christ Himself has risen upon them, and which overcomes secular optimism and pessimism (compare the General Part, § 51 ff.). We give ourselves up to no fantastic imaginations about what can be accomplished in the course of the present world, to no dreams, as if even in the present world's time evil would more and more fully disappear before progressive civilisation and culture. We know that the tares are among the wheat, and that both will grow together *till the harvest*. We know the complaint of the sower about the seed that falls on the way, and is devoured and perishes; but we know likewise the sower's comfort, that yet at least some seed will bear good and blessed fruit. And that parable of the seed and the various field applies not only to the preaching of the word, but finds its



application to all the circles of life in which work is done for God's kingdom.

§ 88.

Enthusiasm and labour for God's kingdom includes philanthropy, both universal and individual, love to the race, to the community of men, and to single individuals. To love the race or society, without love to individuals, is a love lacking true and healthy reality. And to love individuals, without love to the whole of human society, is again a love lacking the higher sense and spirit. The individual ought not to be loved as the isolated individual, but as one who is likewise a member of the great social whole, as one who has either already become or else is destined to become a citizen of God's kingdom.

Even in relation to human individuals, Christ teaches us to become lord over false *optimism* and false *pessimism*. Optimism here appears as that one-sided philanthropic view that finds men excellent, and holds that if only the external arrangements were once made better, we would have before our eyes a race willing only what is good and just. It appears in that deification which men often mutually practise, parents with children, friends with friends; it appears in man-worship, which those in lower positions often give to those who have a higher place, in the worship of genius, in the deification of the mighty on earth, that man-worship which in its essence is one with the fear of man, because it finds the highest standard for human actions in the judgment of men. Against this over-estimate of men Christianity declares itself most decidedly. "None is good, but God only" (Mark x.). "We are men like you," said Paul to the heathen, rending his clothes because they would worship him as a god, would practise the worship of genius with him; "we preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God" (Acts xiv. 15). "Beware of men," said Christ to the disciples when He sent them out "as sheep among wolves" (Matt. x. 17), by which He annihilates all philanthropic naivete and credulity. And in regard to His own person we read, that when many believed in Him only because of the signs that He did, He did not entrust Himself to them (John ii. 23 f.).

But as in its judgment of men Christianity forms an

opposition to heathen optimism, so it also places itself against heathen pessimism. *Contempt of men* is a ground-feature of heathenism, which goes side by side with the deification of men, and we can trace this twofold extreme down to the heathenism of our own days. This contempt of men appeared not only in the procedure towards slaves and the female sex, but came to light, besides, in many more general phenomena. Even one of the seven wise men of Greece, Bias, said of men in general, "The mass is bad." Seneca and Tacitus repeatedly express a dark, misanthropic view; and Lucian confesses that he hated the preponderant majority of men, as it consists of deceivers and deceived. In our time, the contempt of men has found its completed expression in Schopenhauer's now generally known pessimism. In his view, one must keep the conviction every moment before him, that one is come into a world peopled by morally and intellectually wretched beings, whose fellowship one must in every way avoid. But as long as one is among them, one must consider oneself, and behave like a Brahmin in the midst of Sudras and Parias. The surest means against the bipeds (bipedes)—for so he is wont to designate the human species—is contempt, but that most thorough, as the result of a perfectly clear and evident insight into the incredible littleness of their way of thought, into the enormous contractedness of their understanding, into the boundless egoism of their mind, from which proceed flagrant injustice, pale envy and wickedness, going the length of cruelty, all phenomena that can be amply established from every-day life, from history and literature. Schopenhauer confesses of himself that in his thirtieth year he had already become heartily disgusted with having to regard beings as his equals who yet in truth were not so. Still he continued to look around him for real men. But with the exception of Goethe, Fernow, and partly also Friedr. Aug. Wolf, he only found extremely few. Thus he at last arrived at the view that nature is infinitely sparing in the production of genuine men, and that he, even as Byron, must bear with dignity and patience what the latter calls "the loneliness of kings."

This aristocratically exalted pessimism—and every pessimism even to that of Christianity is at the bottom aristocratic—utters a series of statements, to which Christianity also

adheres in the one utterance, "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John v. 19). But with this its doctrine of universal sinfulness, Christianity combines the doctrine of the creation of man in God's image, and his destiny to be redeemed through Christ. While it teaches us to be distrustful toward men on account of universal sinfulness, it likewise teaches us to trust that in every man that is of God. Instead of *contempt* of men, it teaches us *regard* for men, that is, insight into the value of the human personality, even towards the most deeply sunken. Would we, then, place ourselves, and behave in the Christian sense and spirit towards men, we should not only combat in ourselves that natural credulity which is forgetful of the predominant sinfulness of the race, those illusory conceptions of human advantages and perfections, that is, as well all deification as all fear of men, but equally also the contempt and hatred of men. Hatred assigns, indeed, an importance to the object to which it is directed, but likewise aims at the annihilation of it, whereas contempt regards it as a mere nullity. But the one is in relation to men as unjustifiable as the other. "Formerly," as a pious man has said, "I contemned men, but now I condemn my contempt; or, to speak as a Christian, I repent of it." Actions and states one may indeed despise, but not the personality made in God's image. When Christ says, Matt. vii. 6, "Give not that which is holy unto the *dogs*, neither cast ye your pearls before *swine*," He does not thereby utter His contempt, but a divine *sentence of judgment* and an admonition.

### § 89.

Who is my *neighbour*? The answering of this question, as it seems, can now no longer present any difficulty; but when this question was put for the first time, it was of world-historical importance, because men in general were then bound by national limits, and "my neighbour" was only he who belonged to the same people as myself. But my neighbour is every man, because God made the human race to spring from one blood, and we are thus all members of the body of humanity. But in a special sense he is my neighbour who is placed nearer me, or who approaches me with a claim of

love, or else with a gift, a service of love. This is what is placed before our eyes in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30). "*A man*" went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves—so it is said of that unfortunate, who lay in the way of the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. Nothing is told us of the nationality of this unfortunate, nothing of his moral worth or worthlessness; we are to know nothing more of him than that he was a *man*; and the Samaritan, who recognised his neighbour in him, had regard to him likewise in this respect alone. On the other hand, it is asked, Who among those people (the Levite, the priest, and the Samaritan) was the neighbour to the unfortunate? And the answer is, "He that showed him mercy." We thus receive two explanations of the term neighbour. My neighbour is he who needs my help, and precisely *my* help, bodily or spiritual; but my neighbour is also he who benefits me, whether in a bodily or spiritual respect. In the deepest sense Christ is thus the man whom I have to regard as my neighbour, the heavenly Samaritan, who, although in the form of God, humbled Himself to become my neighbour, and has done more for us than any one. Thus we have here the two most pregnant definitions of the term "my neighbour," namely, the unfortunate that needs the Samaritan, and the Samaritan that benefits the unfortunate. Between these two points there moves an infinite succession of men, on the one hand with the claim for our own love, on the other with the service of love, who all stand under the category of our neighbour.

Philanthropy is founded on love to God. If we love God, we must also love what He loves, His image on earth, which God Himself expressly commands us to love. But in order that the love of our neighbour, founded in the love to God, may become living and operative, it must first pass through the medium of true self-love; wherefore it is said in the divine commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (namely, in God). It is a daily experience that, according as we love ourselves, we also love our neighbour. He that has no respect for himself, has also no respect for others. He that in bad egoism lives only to himself, will also regard others as egoists, at least as not concerning him (what does

he, or that, matter to me?). He will, granting that the better part should be stirred in him, yet find a thousand excuses why he should pass by the unfortunate, like the priest and the Levite. But he that respects the image of God in himself, will respect it in others also. He who feels what a height, what a richness, but likewise also what poverty and helplessness is combined with being a man; but especially he who feels the need within him to be redeemed from sin and misery, from the curse of vanity under which the whole creation groans, the need of love, of patience, of forgiveness, will certainly also have sympathy with men, will strive in the right sense to fulfil the word of the Lord, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. vii. 12).

A relation of a special kind is formed to the men with whom we are joined in the same faith in the Lord. Here, namely, *brotherly love* awakens, in that we not only feel ourselves branches on the great tree of the human race, but also as branches and tendrils of Christ, as members of Christ's spiritual body, of His Church. Here, then, the order holds good, that Christian brotherly love will especially embrace those who are the very nearest to us, the Christians of our Church fellowship; but it is also to extend to the Christians of other confessions, who build with us on the same One Foundation. Here that love-testament of the Apostle John to Christians applies, "Little children, love one another." He says it to all Christians, and so to Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans and Reformed. The differences may not destroy the consciousness of the deep fundamental unity in the communion of the Lord. And if a heathen has said, "I am a man, and nothing human shall be foreign to me," a word that first gains its right and full meaning through Christianity; a Christian must also say, "I am a Christian, and nothing Christian shall be foreign to me."

#### § 90.

All love of men that follows the example of Christ is *ministering love*, intent in self-denial and self-sacrifice to promote the welfare of men. But all service that is shown to



men has its measure and its limit in the service of the Lord, and must admit of being determined thereby. The pattern of this is shown us in the person of Christ, who in His ministering procedure towards men will only perform the Father's will. His love to men, in which there is no breath of error and of sin, stands in perfect union with the law, as well in the intellectual, internal side of it, as in its more strictly practical side, as well with the law of truth as with that of righteousness. He is indeed, in His ministering revelation of love, Himself the personal truth and righteousness; and for this very reason He encounters so much resistance, because men neither love truth nor righteousness, because on the side of love they desire to be served quite otherwise than the Lord will serve and bless them. Therefore all ministering philanthropy that walks in the footsteps of Christ, must show itself in truth and righteousness. A love that leaves out of account the *truth*, that is, what in the world of thought and speech is of universal validity (normative); or a love that injures *righteousness*, that is, what in the world of volition and action is universally valid and necessary, is ever but an impure love, a lawless, antinomian freedom. "Truth," says Master Eckart, "is so noble, that if God were to turn away from the truth, I would hold to the truth, and let God go,"—in which he no doubt supposes an impossible case. But, on the other hand, it must be said that a truth and righteousness *without love* is only a cold necessity of law, in which the truth is impersonal (an abstract conception), and righteousness only represents an external norm and rule; that such a truth and righteousness ever remains a thing powerless, because it lacks the true might and power, namely, the quickening, inspiring, and animating power that begets freedom and fulness. We would not be able to *love* Christ as the *personal* truth and righteousness if we did not also love Him as love itself. Holy love is in itself the highest reality, the highest truth, and likewise that which possesses the highest power of right for our volition.

And as Christ's love, in its living unity with truth and righteousness, is in its inmost essence God's *pitying grace*, that came down to us to seek and save the lost, and as we ourselves have experienced so great *mercy*, Christian philanthropy

must also show itself as mercy, in deep and inward sympathy with all human misery and woe, all human distress (which in its root is nothing else than the distress and destruction of sin), and must reveal itself in works of mercy. Accordingly it now remains to us to consider philanthropy in its oneness with love of truth and love of righteousness, while at the same time it will have to be viewed in the special manifestation of mercy.

*Philanthropy and Love of Truth.*

§ 91.

That the love of man is essentially and indissolubly united to the love of truth, we declare, first in the general sense, that men can have communion with each other, and repose confidence in each other, only and solely in the element of truth,—that only on the basis of truth an enduring union can be formed. All men have a feeling that we need this pure although not clearly known element, one universally recognised, within which alone can we have communication (exchange and intercourse) with each other, a common light and a common air or spiritual atmosphere within which we become visible, audible, and intelligible the one to the other, and by the clouding of which communion will soon be darkened and poisoned. We here speak of truth, however, not in this indefinite and merely formal sense; truth has also a substance, and there is a truth of a higher as of a lower order. The Christian love of truth is love to Christ, as the in deed revealed, holy truth, that shines through the darkness of this world, and through which all other truth first receives its right appreciation, its right meaning. Only in Christ, and the light which, proceeding from Him, is poured over human nature and all human life, can we love men in the central sense, and only then does philanthropy receive its deepest religious and moral character, when it is rooted in the truth of Christ. Zeal for the truth of Christ, for the gospel of Christ, is thus the first requirement which must be made, if philanthropy is to be exercised in the highest, spiritual relations of human life. Nothing must lie more on the heart of a Christian than to insist upon the absolute value of this gospel as the highest

and holiest benefit, as well for the community as for the individual soul; to do his part to obtain entrance for it among men, and that by all the means in his power, which no doubt are given to one in one measure and compass, and to another in another. In this relation, much must be individually (in relation to the personality) more closely determined. But there is no Christian life of which it is not required somehow to bear *witness* to the heavenly truth. Not only prophets and apostles, not only preachers, pastors, teachers, but without exception all Christians, ought, in the midst of the darkness of this world, to be the light of the world, and ought—each one in the calling wherein he is called—to live their life in the consciousness of this their appointment.

To testify of the truth of Christ means to confirm the absolute validity of that truth, in that it has become the inmost truth of the personality; to so confirm and accredit the same to other personalities that one commends it to their conscience, their moral feeling. “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth”—this word of Christ to Pilate (John xviii. 37), which in a unique sense holds good of the Lord Himself (He is the faithful and true witness, who only declares what He has seen with His Father), this word in a wider sense holds good of all, of every man made after God’s image. For God made man for this, that we men should give witness one to the other of the glory, grace, and truth of that God whose servants we ought to be. This testimony, however, springs at the same time, and as well from obedience to God, to the truth,—for the truth has the absolute *right* to be testified and confessed by us,—as from love to men, in that we let our fellow-men participate in that which to ourselves is the highest good.

## § 92.

Although every Christian is called to testify to the truth, this calling is yet imposed upon different men under different modifications, which are partly determined by the differences of individualities and of the gifts of grace, partly by the differences of times, of states of the world, and of situations. In a special sense, it is the appointment of the Christian

teaching body, as the light of the world and the salt of the earth, to be witnesses to the truth, as ministers of the word to propagate the testimony of Christ by public preaching from generation to generation. In a larger sense, however, every Christian ought, in respect of the universal priesthood belonging to him, to show forth the virtues of Him who has called us from darkness into His marvellous light (1 Pet. ii. 9). In extraordinary, especially critical times, or where a special endowment exists, the laity will also be able to perform the public proclamation of the word; and Church history shows us a succession of examples of this from Stephen, the deacon for the poor, to our own days. But although public preaching is not every man's affair, and although laymen have much need in many cases to lay to heart that admonition of the apostle, "My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (incur a greater responsibility) (Jas. iii. 1); yet every Christian ought to *confess* the gospel of Christ and His Church. And every Christian will find in his immediate circle, and in his special life-relations, and not least even in the present day, many calls to repeat, in opposition to the world and the time-spirit, the testimony of the apostle, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. i. 16).

### § 93.

Love to the truth of Christ and to men is the opposite of indifferentism, *unconcern* for the religious states of others, an indifference that is very often combined with a certain egoistic interest in salvation, the individual having only aimed to bring himself to salvation, while giving up others. The sharpest, most decided opposition to this kind of indifferentism meets us in the Apostle Paul, who exclaims (Rom. ix. 3), "I had wished to be *banished* (personally excluded) from Christ for my brethren who are of Israel," that is, would have sacrificed his own salvation if he could thereby redeem his "kinsmen according to the flesh" from destruction; a hyperbolic expression, which, however, in its vast excess expresses the apostle's burning love, and tells us that he would not be saved *alone*. But this love is also equally opposed to *fanaticism*, that false zeal that denies prudence, that zeal for God

which is without wisdom and knowledge, and is indifferent in respect of the choice of *means*. Fanaticism would force its convictions on others, not merely by external constraint and power, but also by importunities of every kind, without considering that the gospel seeks not to be appropriated in the way of passion and noisy declamation, but in that of conscience and freedom. A Christian must therefore combat both in himself the indifference as well as the fanatical zeal of the egoistic heart, which latter always involves a lack of love and respectful benevolence towards men, but to which especially the state of awakening, of the first overflowing movement of feeling for Christianity, brings with it a temptation. A Christian has, on the contrary, to develop in his mind the genuine love to the truth that is purified and transformed by wisdom and prudence. It is not enough to love the truth, if one do not also love the men who are to receive the truth, and therefore need the truth to be presented to them in such a way and form that they can accept and appropriate it. Christian *tolerance*, or the virtue of toleration towards the deviating convictions of others, is not at all identical with the enduring of error, which a Christian must rather combat, not identical with *that* toleration that lets each one "live on in his own faith, and be saved in his own way," because it regards all religious convictions as equivalent, or alike irrelevant. Christian tolerance is, on the contrary, *one side of Christian zeal for truth itself*, namely, the feature belonging to it of prudence, mildness, and gentleness. It presupposes decided love to the gospel of Christ, the conviction of the absolute necessity of that gospel for the salvation of every human soul. But it also implies that all self-righteous egoism, proud in faith, that all passionateness is excluded from this conviction, and remains remote from the procedure to be shown towards those that think otherwise. Therefore it is also said of Christ, the righteous servant of the Lord, as it had been prophesied of Him, "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets" (Matt. xii. 19), for crying and striving in the streets testifies to a passionate state. Christian toleration and mildness is therefore also opposed to all desire of condemnation, as it rather, with a friendly feeling to those in error, seeks for the points of connection that always are to



be found for the truth, and bears with indulgence the many frailties, and that for the sake of the healthy sides, to which it hopes to be able to link its attempt at healing. Therefore it is said in the same place of Christ, the righteous servant of the Lord, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench." Christian toleration further requires that the truth be only communicated and imparted to others by way of the conscience. Therefore it bears even deviating convictions, requires in name of the gospel religious liberty, and declares against all fanatical proselytizing. In this sense the Lord says to the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. xxiii. 15); for the Pharisees had made the man a Jew indeed, had put their religion on him like a coat, but had not changed the man's heart and disposition, who by such an untrue and hypocritical procedure towards the truth was now come into a worse state than he was in before.

#### § 94.

Christian love, which is manifested in testimony and confession, must not merely bear the deviating convictions of others, but also those *sufferings* that spring from the enmity of the world and its opposition to the gospel. We have a Redeemer who was nailed to the cross for the truth; and he who will bear witness to the truth as His follower must also himself, in one sense or other, assume the cross. The most exalted form of suffering for the truth's sake is martyrdom, namely, when a Christian, for love of the truth, does not value his life, and sheds his blood, *provided* that this martyrdom is not self-produced, but proceeds from the relation of a disciple and servant to the Lord, as likewise from hearty love to men, as we see in Stephen the first Christian martyr, who in dying prays for his murderers, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii. 59). However, suffering for the truth need not be appointed to us actually by fire and sword, but may also come upon us through more spiritual persecutions of the gospel, by the contradiction of sinners, by mockery and scorn, may be an

inward suffering, a pain for the falsifying of the truth, when heresy and unbelief overflow Christendom. It may also, in fine, be an affliction for the insusceptibility of men for the truth, for their unconcern, their stupidity and worldliness, for the indifference that so frequently occurs precisely in times of emancipation — times that form indeed a direct contrast to those when Christianity was persecuted with fire and sword, but which yet have many a quieter Christian martyrdom to show; for in such times it is held not worth the trouble to combat Christianity, it is magnanimously allowed to be authorized as a “view,” an “opinion,” alongside other equally authorized views and opinions, as nothing is to be maintained as absolutely true. Every one must experience something of these sufferings who makes a living confession of his faith, particularly those whom we designate witnesses of the truth in a special historical sense, inasmuch as they publicly appealed to their contemporaries, to the greater community to which they belonged, with the proclamation of the pure gospel, which is at all times to the worldly mind foolishness or an offence. But though this suffering in its various forms is, as a rule, a *result* of the testimony of the truth, yet the *conception* of a witness of the truth is by no means constituted by mere suffering. The constituent is rather the truth itself (the objective truth), and testimony an expression of the inmost truth of the *personality*. Sören Kierkegaard’s position, that only he is a witness of the truth who in the strictest sense of the word is a martyr, that is, a witness to blood, is an entirely arbitrary limitation of that conception. According to this definition, Paul might indeed count for a witness of the truth, but not John; and so too Huss, but not Luther. And even if the conception were to be enlarged so as to apply to “tortured” witnesses in general, it would still remain an erroneous view. For this would involve the idea that there is only a single world-bestowed situation under which witnesses of the truth can arise, namely, the times of *bodily* persecutions. But as the gospel is to be proclaimed at all times,—and there is no true proclamation without testimony, without personal conviction, without one’s own experience, without *fresh and joyful uttering* (testifying) *what one has felt in his life, in opposition*

to unbelief, the time-spirit, the world,—as every time of the gospel needs, as it is always important, to combat error and darkness, there must also possibly be witnesses of the truth at all times and under all situations. Therefore also the whole Christian teaching body is appointed to exist from generation to generation as witness of the truth. And it certainly agrees with sound doctrine, when an old Danish hymn invokes the blessing of God's Spirit—

“That every pastor here and there  
May by his life Thee praise,  
That the word of Thy *witnesses*  
Be shown in all their ways.”<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, testifying to the truth, the office of witness-bearing is viewed as common to the whole pastorate.

External suffering, and, moreover, a single special form of it, cannot possibly constitute the idea of that testimony, does not form its essence. It is also evident that mere suffering as such is an uncertain testimony for the truth; for falsehood has also its martyrs, who have attracted the enmity and hatred of men, have endured suffering and death, although not for the truth, yet at least for their convictions. And supposing that we had only a suffering and crucified Saviour lying in His grave, we would be uncertain in our faith, while we now, in connection with the witness of the Spirit in our heart, likewise find the proof of the truth of Christ *in this*, that the Crucified is also the *Risen One*, and that that “stone which the builders had rejected is become the corner-stone.”<sup>2</sup> But it is certainly an essential requirement that he that would be called a witness of the truth must be *ready* for the truth's sake even to suffer—not, indeed, all that fancy may imagine and depict, but yet all that is laid upon us to endure for the truth's sake. Perhaps there is one who would prefer to make the sacrifice of martyrdom while the Lord simply requires of him another sacrifice. And however high (wherein the Holy Scripture precedes us) we may place martyrdom, properly so

<sup>1</sup> After a hymn of Kingo's that begins: “O Jesu, Præst i Evighed.” With this may be compared Bishop Mynster's farewell sermon (delivered in Trinity Church, Copenhagen), “What witness hast thou borne before thy Lord?” *Occasional Church Discourses* (Danish), I. 40 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Letters to and from Sibbern*, II. 225 (Danish).

called, we must yet remember that there may be individuals who would be able to endure such a thing without, perhaps, being able to endure a martyrdom of another kind, and who would far prefer to this a suffering or dying compressed into a few moments or hours, where the whole energy of the will and character is concentrated in one great tragic moment, and the exit from the world is rayed round with a light of the ideal, the heroic; rather than have to pass a course of years unnoticed, amid endless little trials of patience, little sufferings and hindrances, annoyances and troubles in the desert of prose and triviality, amid an incessantly renewed grief at the thorough contrast between reality and ideal. In this respect also it is extremely difficult to decide who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Besides, it is to be remembered that the testimony of truth, just because it bears in itself the stamp of the personality, must be borne *in love* (Eph. iv. 15: "But speaking the truth in love"); but that with many who, as witnesses of the truth, have attracted the world's hatred and enmity, it is very uncertain how much of that hatred was called forth by the truth, and how much by the want of love, bitterness and fanaticism, with which they declared the truth.

### § 95.

What we have here said about the central relation of the soul—the relation to the gospel, to the holy truth—applies equally in all lower worldly relations; and our duty to bear witness to the holy truth is defined in the ordinary human relations as the universal duty of truth: "Thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not lie, neither in word nor deed; thou shalt neither deny the truth, nor give out anything that is not truth for truth"—and this commandment must dominate and penetrate all our life's relations. In this, that the man stands in that relation to the truth altogether, that he is to be subject to it and serve it, his duty of truth, or the duty to be faithful to the truth in speech and action, finds its complete foundation; and every other foundation which is not based upon the relation mentioned is only to be regarded as relative. *Kant* derives the blameworthiness of falsehood from the respect which man is bound to pay to the dignity of his moral nature. Lying, he says, is sin against my ideal ego, against humanity in me.

The liar must despise himself; for by lying I lower myself to a mere phenomenon, to a mask, renounce being *myself*, commit partial suicide of my true man, and let a feigned man occupy its place. Fichte, again, starts from the idea of the community, and so from the viewpoint of the justice which every one owes to the freedom of others. By lying I lead others astray, treat them as mere means for my egoistic objects, place an undue limit to their freedom. But moral beings dare not be treated as means, but as their own end.—Each of these modes of view contains a warrantable element; and the Holy Scripture also urges regard to the community when it says, “Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are *members* one of another” (Eph. iv. 25). But these relative viewpoints must be taken up into the one highest, all-embracing point of view, namely, regard to God, the absolute Truth, whose servant and instrument man is to be. Truth does not exist for man’s sake, but man for the sake of truth, because the truth would reveal itself to man, would be owned and testified by him. And this holds good by no means of the religious sphere only, but of all circles of life. Everywhere would light reveal itself and dispel darkness; and man, as the created spirit, ought to be in the moral order of the world bearer and servant of the light. There are cases in which the truth ought not to be said, because it is of no use. But there are also cases in which the truth ought to be said, although it is of no use, because the light *will* shine in the darkness, although the darkness comprehends it not (John i. 5).

When the duty of truthfulness is insisted on, it is customary indeed to add the restriction: one should speak the truth, according to his best *conviction*. But then of what sort is the conviction of the majority of men, especially in reference to the things of God? Genuine conviction and certainty only springs from this, that the truth itself has its *being* in me, dwells in me, is fused with my personality. Therefore Christ is the *only True One*; for the truth is one with His person (John xiv. 6). And therefore in our duty to speak the truth, the requirement is contained that we should personally *be* true, that the truth have purified us within, that the Spirit that leads us into all truth have made abode in us. Only



when the Spirit of truth bears witness to our spirit, and testifies with it (Rom. viii. 16), can we be said to be *convinced*; therefore we must incessantly purify the foundation of our conviction, and develop in us love to the truth. At the great day we shall not be judged by this, whether we have spoken and acted according to conviction; but our convictions themselves, as well as the ways by which, the mode and manner in which we attained to them, are then to be judged. But there is nothing that men take more easily than just their ideas of conviction and love of truth. Who does not boast of his love of truth? And who has not his convictions? And yet, as a rule, the religious, political, philosophical, æsthetic conviction of people means nothing more than opinions or suppositions, to which they at some time give their approval, but which have no root in their personality; or they are certain inclinations and disinclinations, certain passionate party interests, to which they are pleased to give the name of convictions. When Paul persecuted the Christian Church he certainly acted from conviction, yet it was only a fanatical conviction, which he afterwards himself condemned as sin.

#### § 96.

Although we are, without reserve and limitation, to be true to ourselves, yet it does not follow from this that our duty to communicate the truth to others is unlimited. That limits are set even to the duty of truthfulness is implied even in this, that it is becoming to speak the truth not otherwise than with wisdom, and that it may be our duty, according to time and circumstances, to be reserved with the truth. "There is a time to be silent, and a time to speak" (Eccles. iii. 7). No one is bound to say everything to everybody. No teacher or preacher is bound to speak the whole entire truth to his hearers at once; but is required to consider in this the receptivity of the hearers, and must lead them gradually to the knowledge of the truth. "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now," says Christ to the disciples (John xvi. 12). And so He also warns us not to give what is holy to the dogs, nor to cast pearls before swine (Matt. vii. 6).

But now when the truth must be imparted, are we then in all cases bound to speak the simple, literal, immediate truth; or is there also a mediate, an indirect imparting of the truth, and can this be entirely justified according to place and time? There are Christians—for instance, the Quakers—who have denied the latter, and therefore lay down the rule that only the pure, naked truth dare be imparted. They therefore reject not only the conventional phrases of politeness, although the value of them is known to every one, and no one can be led astray by them, but they also reject in the imparting of truth every deviation, every kind of disguise of the truth, for instance, the application of irony, because this involves a mere appearance, a false show, a certain dissimulation, which in their view is in contradiction to the truth. Yet this one-sided conception of truth rests on this, that the difference is not perceived that exists between true and false appearance. There is a true appearance, which occurs at a certain stage of reflection, of spiritual culture, and by means of which the essence or the truth is made manifest; and there is a false, lying appearance, which hides the essence and hinders the knowledge of the truth. For appearance is that which has only an *apparent* reality. But true appearance *likewise expresses*, as, for instance, irony does, that its reality is only *apparent, seeming*, and points to the truth as the right reality; while the false, lying appearance says nothing of this, and therefore only deceives, only leads astray and seduces the observer or hearer to accept the merely seeming, the merely imaginary, as truth and reality, and instead thereof. If we want to reject appearance in every sense, we must also condemn all poetic clothing of the truth, must, with Tertullian, condemn the fine arts altogether, whose element is just appearance, illusion, but such illusion as makes itself known *as such*, and by means of illusion reveals the ideal truth. Now, that there may even be relations in life where the indirect, figurative communication of the truth is in place, especially to pave the way and open the door for the open, unconcealed communication, even the Holy Scripture bears witness. We may here, for instance, refer to the prophet Nathan, who had to show king David his sin, but first began to relate the parable of the rich man who stole the poor man's only sheep, and only when

the king was prepared by this roundabout way, made the transition to the directly urgent: "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. xii.).

### § 97.

If we teach, then, that in certain circumstances it may be a justifiable, nay, an obligatory procedure to impart the truth by the application of appearance, that is, of truthful appearance, there still remains, however, the difficult question, whether in certain circumstances it may be justifiable in intercourse with other men also to apply the false appearance, nay, whether the duty may emerge of saying an untruth, by which others are intentionally led astray, or, in other words, whether the so-called *lie of exigency* can ever be justifiable? That a lie of exigency, merely proceeding from egoism, from selfishness, from regard to personal convenience, is to be rejected, needs no demonstration. As little need we enlarge on this, that the biblical examples of otherwise pious and venerable men, who made use of a lie of exigency to deliver themselves from a *difficulty* (for instance, Abraham and David), are not adapted to justify it. The question we have to deal with is this, Is there an untruth from exigency in the service of *duty*?

The greatest authorities are here opposed to each other. So even the most esteemed Church Fathers. Basil the Great (330-379) rejects every lie of exigency, while Chrysostom (347-407) defends it. Augustine (353-429) condemns it most decidedly, and says that if even the whole human race could be saved by one lie, one must rather let it perish; Jerome (377-420), again, finds the lie of exigency admissible. Calvin will on no account hear of it; Luther calls it not good indeed, but yet excuses it in certain cases as admissible. Kant and Fichte reject it; Jacobi defends it ("I will lie like Desdemona, I will lie and deceive like Pylades, who took the place of Orestes," and so on, as we find it in that famous passage of his letter to Fichte).

Those who unconditionally reject the lie of exigency start from this, that the truth is the unconditionally justified, to which all else must be subordinated. The consequences of my words and actions, say they, are not in my power; but the truth is the highest law, which I must obey. We dare not at all, says

Fichte, reason on the consequences of our actions; we ought only to act and speak as duty commands, and leave the consequences in the hand of Providence. The utmost you can risk when you speak the truth is the hazard of your life, or that others hazard their lives for it. That signifies nothing if only duty is fulfilled, and the truth runs its course. How strictly, nay, how regardlessly, Fichte would have this principle carried through, we may learn from a conversation that Steffens<sup>1</sup> has reported to us, and which may serve to lead us into the investigation of the question itself. Steffens, that is, presents to Fichte the following case:—"A mother who has lately been delivered of a child is lying dangerously ill; in the adjoining room her child lies dead. The mother anxiously asks her husband how her child is. If he announces the death of the child, there is every probability that the mother will die under the stunning effect of the news. What, then, is the husband to answer to her question?" Fichte replies to this, "She must be put off with her question." But to this it is rejoined that this off-putting would itself be an answer, and that an extremely disquieting one; at any rate indicating that the child's life was in danger. To this objection Fichte can only reply, "If the woman die of the truth, then let her die."

The general principle here proceeded upon must be indeed approved by all, and yet the majority, when they hear this cold, regardless decision, will feel an inward revolt, will have a feeling that the letter killeth, and that the question needs a closer consideration. We think of Rousseau, who says the strictest morality costs nothing upon paper. When Augustine requires us to subordinate the love of man to the love of truth, this love of truth must first be more exactly defined. It cannot be overlooked that the lower truth is subordinated to the higher, that the impersonal, abstract, and merely formal truth is less than the loving *personal* truth. But truth of *sentiment* especially belongs to personal truth, and that not only in reference to God, but also to men, truth in the relation of love and faithfulness, truth in the loving care for those to whom we are bound in love. Truth is opposed to the seeming. But now the question presents itself to us,

<sup>1</sup> Henr. Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, IV. 157

whether it is congruous with the truth, with the reality of love and amiable sentiment, to manifest such regardlessness towards a beloved dear being as to tell a truth, the literal communication of which just at the hour may be fatal, while it may at another and later time be imparted without danger; whether by the strict formal fulfilment of the duty of truth one does not degrade the whole relation of love to an impersonal relation, that is, to a mere appearance? The rigour that would have the regardless communication of the truth carried through, entirely overlooks the difference between the single, formally *right* (correct), and the truth embracing the *whole* relation, *all* sides of the thing; and especially overlooks, too, that all communication of truth in particular, in every special case, must be regulated by *wisdom*, which also takes into account the prospective consequences of human actions, although it is true these consequences are not in every respect in our power. Rigour further overlooks, or at least does not duly recognise, how in a word it is part of the exigency and misery of this life that collisions inevitably arise between the lower and higher truth; not as if these truths collided in themselves, or were essentially irreconcilable, yet they collide and are irreconcilable *for this acting individual*. It overlooks that the possibility of solving such collisions is not given us with abstract rules that could equally be followed by all, but that the solution is only possible in a purely individual way; that it depends on that stage of moral and religious development on which the acting individuality is found, on the measure of moral power and wisdom, of presence of mind and tact that are at its service at the decisive moment. But now, if the acting individual is not found at the religious and moral temperature, does not possess the geniality to be able to solve the collision and unite the truth of the letter with that of the spirit, there only remains for him the moral possibility to sacrifice the lower concern for the higher, in order by such means to save his personal relation to this higher concern. There then occurs, indeed, a certain injury of that which dare not be injured, and every untruth from exigency is a testimony that the acting individual was not equal to this special case and its difficulty, is not "the perfect man who offendeth not in word" (Jas. iii. 2), so, that



is, as to know how to unite spirit and letter. But as in other departments there are actions which, although from the standpoint of the ideal they are to be rejected, yet, from the hardness of men's hearts, must be approved and admitted, and under this restriction become relatively justifiable and dutiful actions, simply because greater evils are thereby averted; so there is also an untruth from exigency that must still be allowed for the sake of human weakness. So in the case quoted, where the husband deceives his sick wife, because he fears for her life, were he *at this moment* to inform her of the child's death. Had he, with all love in his heart, taken on his lips the overwhelming literal truth, without daring to take credit for the power and wisdom to remove its deadly sting from this truth, would he not then have injured the higher truth, the truth of sentiment and of the mind, the holy duty of love, and have acted in contradiction to himself? Or, to take another example from an entirely different sphere: A woman who, to rescue her chastity from the most imminent danger, leads her persecutors astray, and employs an untruth as defence in peril, does she act contrary to justice and duty when she sacrifices the formal truth of words for the truth of the personality, for fidelity to herself, for the preservation of her own personal worth, while this presents itself to her as the only possible outlet?

We have wished, by the two examples given, to indicate the two chief occasions on which we can speak at all of untruth justified by exigency. That is, the many and manifold cases may be in general reduced to this, that such untruth is either uttered from *love to men*, or as *defence against men* — a defence in which either a justifiable self-love or sympathy with others is operative. Now, if moral rigour in these cases will not have the slightest respect either to the hardness or the weakness of the heart, but insists on the absolute assertion of the truth of the letter, we have not only to protest that such rigour in many cases involves an injury and displacement of the higher truth, an offence against that which must be recognised as of *high value and validity*, when the whole relation, when all sides of the thing are taken into account. But it comes into conflict with the truth in yet another sense. One may be convinced of this by considering

the rules of conduct that the rigorists prescribe for particular cases, the evasions they counsel, that the necessity of telling an untruth may be avoided, which consist partly in preserving entire silence, partly in evasive answers, which are ever turning into equivocal answers, approximating to Jesuitism, where the words are ambiguous and full of reservation—a process in which, in order not to offend the letter of the truth, one is involved in a web of sophistry that disturbs and confuses the simple natural feeling of truth, and is far worse than a simple untruth. It comes to this, that the question of casuistry cannot be solved by general and abstract directions, but must be solved in an individual, personal way, especially according to the stage of moral and religious development and ripeness on which the person in question is found.

### § 98.

When we thus maintain that in certain difficult cases an “untruth from necessity” may occur, which is to be allowed for the sake of human weakness, and under the given relations may be said to be justified and dutiful; we cannot but allow, on the other hand, that in every such untruth there is something of sin, nay, something that needs excuse and forgiveness. And no doubt one may designate the definitions here used—“justified” and again “needing excuse,” on the one hand “justified,” but yet on the other tainted with “sin”—as contradictory to each other; but then, do we not meet with such contradictions in this world of sinfulness and of entanglements, in more than one form? Are they not repeated in very many points in the tragedy of this life? Certainly even the truth of the letter, the external, actual truth, even the formally correct, finds its right, the ground of its validity, in God’s holy order of the world. But by every lie of exigency the command is broken, “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” It does not avail with several in the number of those who defend the lie of exigency, for instance with Rothe, to say that the witness in such a case does not proceed from bad egoistic motives, but from motives of justice and of love; and that, therefore, it is not at all to be called a lie, but can be absolutely defended as morally *normal*, and so in no respect needs pardon. For

however sharply we may distinguish between lie and untruth (*mendacium* and *falsiloquium*), the untruth in question can never be resolved into the morally normal; just as little as divorce, *e.g.*, or separation, can be said to be morally normal, although separation in particular cases may become a duty. If this untruth has not the egoistic motive in common with the lie, it has at least something else in common, namely, that it aims at leading others astray, sets forth the false for the true, that a purpose of deception occurs in it, if not in the heart of the speaker, yet in his mouth—that, in a word, it belongs to the category of *false appearance*; and if it be said that the false appearance is only a means that is sanctified by the good end, there is here something of that Jesuitical morality we spoke of. For false appearance is in God's kingdom, in the world-order of eternal truth and holiness, that which is after its idea unwarranted, that which ought not to be. If now it be said nevertheless that there are cases in which such an untruth is not to be avoided, but which a Christian can only feel as a *suffering*, this points to a state of universal sinfulness, a curse of mendacity lying on humanity. If we look into our social relations, what an abyss of untruth, of deceptions and falsifications of every kind, opens to our view! That in such a world, which is filled not only with lying words, but also with lying works and customs, complications and difficult cases of conscience may occur, is very explicable.

But while we thus find the ground of manifold collisions especially in the corruption of human society, we must with no less emphasis insist that their insolubility very often proceeds from the weakness and frailty of *individuals*. For the question ever still remains, whether the said collisions between the truth of the letter and that of the spirit could not be solved if these individuals only stood on a higher stage of moral and religious ripeness, possessed more faith and trust in God, more courage to leave the consequences of their words and actions in the hand of God, and likewise considered how much in the consequences of our actions is hidden from our view, and cannot be reckoned by us; if these individuals possessed more *wisdom* to tell the truth in the right way; in other words, whether the collision could not be solved if we were only, in a far higher degree than is the case, morally

educated characters, Christian personalities? Let us suppose, for instance, the previous case, where the husband deceives his sick spouse from fear that she could not survive the news of the death of her child: who dare maintain that if the man had been able in the right way, that is, in the power of the gospel, with the wisdom and the comfort of faith, to announce the death of the child, a religious crisis might not have arisen in her soul, which might have a healing and quickening effect upon her bodily state? And supposing that it had even led to her death, who dare maintain that that death, if it was a Christian death, were an evil, whether for the mother herself or for the survivors? Or, let us take the woman who, to save her chastity, applies the defence of an untruth: who dare maintain that if she said the truth to her persecutors, but uttered it in womanly heroism, with a believing look to God, with the courage, the elevation of soul springing from a pure conscience, exhibiting to her persecutors the badness and unworthiness of their object, she might not have disarmed them by that might that lies in the good, the just cause, the cause whose defence and shield God Himself will be? And even if she had to suffer what is unworthy, who dare maintain that she could not in suffering preserve her moral worth? And the dying Desdemona, whom Jacobi celebrates indeed, yet so that he still in the end finds an excuse needful for her, who dare maintain that she could not with a higher and purer love "cover the multitude of sins," could not in a purer and more perfect way have spread the veil of love and forgiveness over the crime which her spouse had committed against her? The same case thus receives a different solution according to the different individualities, and their different moral and religious stage of development.

An admirable procedure in a moral and religious aspect, in circumstances where philanthropy and love of truth come into conflict with each other, is drawn for us by Sir Walter Scott in his incomparable *Heart of Midlothian*. Human love here appears in the form of tender sisterly love. Jeanie Deans can save the life of her sister, who has been accused of the murder of her child, if she utters a lie of exigency, confirmed by an *oath* indeed, before the court; but if she gives her evidence in harmony with the literal truth, her sister will in conse-

quence be executed *innocent*. For, according to the highly unreasonable law of that time, she who concealed her pregnancy, and failed to call for the help of any one at her confinement, in case her child anyhow disappeared, was regarded as guilty of its deliberate destruction. If now Jeanie declares on oath that her sister had revealed her state to her, the sister is saved. But though Jeanie is fully convinced that her sister had not committed the crime of which she was accused, yet she will not and dare not swear this oath, since her sister had told her nothing. Thus, then, the latter is condemned to death. Most people will find, indeed, that here was the place for an antinomy in that key of Jacobi ("I will lie like the dying Desdemona, break law and oath like Epaminondas, and so on"), to give precedence to the love and the internal conviction of the innocence of the sister before the literal truth conformed to law, to save the life of the unfortunate and in this case certainly innocent sister, rather than bow to the killing letter of an unreasonable law. Most people would at least be disposed to excuse Jeanie Deans, and to forgive her, if she had here made a false oath, and thereby had afforded her protection to the *higher truth*. But she will, can, and dare, for her conscience' sake, not do this. Yet, after the sentence of death is pronounced, she employs all the means of love, of the most sacrificing fidelity, which to most people had certainly been too inconvenient, undergoes dangers and hardships, travels on foot the long and dangerous way to reach the Duke of Argyle, is presented to the Queen, where she pleads the cause of her sister and of her whole unhappy family, and finally obtains grace for her sister. *Trusting in God*, she has now not only done justice to the truth, but also to sisterly love. It is especially her faith, her trust in God, to which we have to direct our attention. For this is her way of thinking: If God will save my poor sister, and if He will save her through me, He can do this without the need of my lie, and without me taking His name in vain, contrary to His express commandment. And who dare contradict the truth that lies at the bottom of this way of thinking?

But the best thing in this tale is that it is no mere fiction. The kernel of this celebrated romance is actual history. Jeanie Deans really lived on earth, and in everything essential



acted just as has been related. Sir Walter Scott caused a monument to be erected in his garden with the following inscription:—

“This stone was placed by the Author of *Waverley* in memory of Helen Walker, who fell asleep in the year of our Lord 1791. This maiden practised in humility all the virtues with which fancy has adorned the character that bears in fiction the name of Jeanie Deans. She would not depart a foot-breadth from the path of truth, not even to save her sister’s life; and yet she obtained the liberation of her sister from the severity of the law, by personal sacrifices whose greatness was not less than the purity of her aims. Honour to the grave where poverty rests in beautiful union with truthfulness and sisterly love.”<sup>1</sup>

Who will not readily obey this request, and hold such a memory in honour? And who will not admit—even granting we would have found it deserving excuse, nay, fitted to appear in a very mild light, and pardonable, if she had, to save her sister’s life, sworn the false oath—that he must only now respect, nay, in a far higher degree *esteem* her, than in the other case would have been possible? Who does not feel himself penetrated with involuntary, most hearty admiration?

### § 99.

We are thus anew brought back to this, that in order to say the truth in difficult circumstances, a moral power of the personality and a wisdom is required, in which the chief thing is the “single eye” (Matt. vi. 22), combined with the readiness likewise to make sacrifices, and not to spare oneself—requirements which transcend the abilities of most people; wherefore they choose the resource of helping themselves by cunning, which is ever a testimony that the power, in the present case, moral and religious power, does not prove efficacious. If we therefore have said above, that in certain cases the lie of exigency is inevitable owing to hardness of heart, yet we cannot but likewise most strongly emphasize that it must be our task to overcome this human weakness. The lie of exigency itself, which we call inevitable, leaves in

<sup>1</sup> Eberty, *W. Scott*, 2, 285.

us the feeling of something unworthy, and this unworthiness should, simply in following Christ, more and more disappear from our life. That is, the inevitableness of the lie of exigency will disappear in the same measure that an individual develops into a true personality, a true character; the more he grows in faith, in courage, in willingness to suffer and make sacrifices for the truth's sake, in right wisdom; in the measure that a man increases in moral power and energy, he will be able to dispense with the application of craft. For the more energetic and wise, in a religious and moral sense, a personality is, the more independent is it of its surroundings; then exercises upon them a determining influence, or at least preserves its independence of them, suffering what must be suffered, while craft is ever the sign of a false dependence on surroundings. Schleiermacher, who absolutely rejects the lie of exigency, lays down the rule, that we ought so to order our relations that the necessity to use a lie of exigency cannot occur with us, so that no one ventures to propose a question to us that should not be put, or in case it is still proposed to us, it can be set aside without a lie of exigency. But as the occasion to say an untruth may also possibly occur for us, without our being directly asked, we would rather express it thus, that we have to follow after the spirit of *power* that gives us faith and courage, that works in us the energy of truth and love in our conduct towards others, and that we are to seek after the spirit of *wisdom*, that teaches us to act with full consideration, so that we keep all relations in their totality ever before our eyes. But this we may also express thus, that we are to strive *to be true*; for only when truth has become our nature (as, in Jeanie Deans, truthfulness was her most proper nature) can we also possess the entire personal tact and the full security that is necessary to the decision of difficult relations.

What we have here set forth is indeed an ideal which can only approximately become reality; but where it has been realized in its full meaning, all untruth from exigency is absolutely impossible. A lie of exigency cannot occur with a personality that is found in possession of full courage, of perfect love and holiness, as of the enlightened, all-penetrating glance. Not even as against madmen and maniacs will a lie of exigency be required, for to the word of the truly sanctified

personality there belongs an imposing, commanding power that casts out demons. It is this that we see in Christ, "in whose mouth no guile was found" (1 Pet. ii. 22), in whom we find nothing that even most remotely belongs to the category of the exigent lie. One with His word is His holy personality, which remains unconfounded with the sinfulness of this world; and "the prince of this world has nothing (no part) in Him" (John xiv. 30). In this holy might of His holy wisdom and personality He solves all collisions and overcomes all doubtful and difficult situations. And although He cannot hinder His enemies from addressing unsuitable and tempting questions to Him, yet He answers them, as it is written, "And no man could answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions" (Matt. xxii. 46).

### § 100.

As there is an untruth from exigency, so also a truth from exigency, that is to say, the oath. The oath presupposes the fact that in human society the love of man and the love of truth are but very imperfect; presupposes that men lack confidence in each other, and that their love of truth, their respect and reverence for the truth, in many cases need to be supported by the extraordinary means of the oath. But it belongs to the love of man and of the truth as much as possible to cherish and preserve the sanctity of the oath in human society.

The oath is the solemn assurance of the truth of an utterance, with invocation of God the omniscient and holy, who punishes lying. Were God's kingdom present on earth in its perfection, the oath would be superfluous; for all would speak the truth, and one would be manifest to the other. But in the world there is actually falsehood and mutual suspicion, and therefore from of old the oath sprang up as a guarantee for truthfulness; for the guarantee for the constant fulfilment of the duty of truth lies in the personal relation of man to the highest holy truth, that is to say, to God. While the introduction of the oath into human society and its use arises from a distrust of men, it presupposes as well a trust in men,

namely, that when placed before God's face they will feel moved to speak the truth. For him who still lies there is no court above. The sworn utterance is assumed under the highest all-embracing truth, and the personal relation of the swearer to it. As *truly* as God lives, or as *truly* as God may help me and His holy word, so *true* is also this my single utterance, whether it be an affirmation (*juramentum asser-torium*), an oath of testimony or of purgation, or a promise (*juramentum promissorium*). The oath has a certain kinship to prayer, in so far as the swearer, like him who prays, is withdrawn from all finite relations and placed before God's face. But alongside this similarity there stands a great difference. For prayer arises from love's need of communion with God, and will never cease, neither in the present nor in the future world; the oath, again, arises from the necessity of the law in a sinful world, that has fallen from love, and in which, instead of love, the mere relation of justice has entered. The oath will vanish when the dominion of sin and of the law vanishes.

In general the oath, therefore, also finds its application in the domain of the state, to whose task it belongs to afford guarantees against crime. But in that the state cannot dispense with the oath, it thereby acknowledges that its external guarantees are not sufficient, but that, besides them, it needs not only the moral, but also the *religious* guarantee. As a guarantee for truthfulness, the oath has a shielding and protecting, a defensive and preventive, a truth-compelling meaning. From the standpoint of the ideal, from the standpoint of God's kingdom, considered in its perfection, the oath must be rejected as something superfluous, as something that cannot occur in the communion of saints, and belongs to lower circles of life. In this we find the ground for the utterance of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 33-36; compare Jas. v. 12): "Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

But let your speech be Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." The sense of these words has been disputed, whether, that is, they contain an unconditional rejection of the oath, or only a conditional ; reject not swearing in itself, but only its light use in daily life ; declare against certain hair-splitting doctrines of the rabbis, which led to this, that men avoided indeed swearing by the name of God, but with the more levity used other swearing formulas,—by the heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, his own head, and so on. But the connection does not permit us to understand the Lord's words in such a limited sense. And how feeble and empty, how destitute of all pregnancy and point His words become, if they were to say nothing more than this, "Thou shalt make no false oath, but shalt keep thy oath to God ; *but I* say to you, Ye shall not *lightly* swear in daily life, and shall not swear by the *creature*." Has it been said that the Lord mentions only swearing by the creature as oaths to be rejected, but not those made to God, or the oath itself, which might thus be viewed as approved ; it is answered that the last did not need to be expressly named, as this was throughout presupposed, as it was also said to them of old time, "Thou shalt perform to *God* thine oath." But in that Christ mentions the oath by the creature, by heaven, by earth, and so on, He will hereby make us conscious that at bottom every such oath is an oath by God the Lord, because the thought thereby must necessarily revert to God ("heaven is *His* throne, earth is *His* footstool," and so on) ; and this it is, namely, swearing itself, and in itself, that is disallowed, and that because our speech should be Yea, yea ; Nay, nay. The limitation which we allow is to be given to these words of the Lord, must thus be sought in another way. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ expounds the law after its spiritual and internal meaning ; reduces the law of Moses, which is affected with the character of a civil law of right, to the law of the gospel, that of love ; utters the infinite requirements of perfection, which can find their true and perfect fulfilment nowhere but within a condition of the community very different from the present. Not as if these requirements showed us only an empty ideal. Rather they are already beginning to be fulfilled, and the communion of saints exists already in the world.



But partly this communion of saints is still hidden, partly it is in the dispersion, in a diaspora. Even after the gospel has come into the world, the dominion of sin and of the law remains in the world, until the day of the completion of all things. Even after the kingdom of God has come with that righteousness of heart that is revealed in the life of truly Christian individuals, the *kingdom of civil righteousness* stands in the same compass as the kingdom of external ordinances and relations of right, to which in their temporal existence all without a difference are subject. A Christian must thus live his life in both kingdoms, and must strive to fulfil the requirements of the one as of the other, like as Christ Himself, in order to fulfil *all* righteousness, even that required by the existing earthly community, willingly submitted to the ordinances and laws of His people, although in spirit He was exalted above them. The Mennonites, the Quakers, and other sects, who regard it as something unworthy of a Christian, nay, contrary to duty, to make the oath required by authority, hereby pay homage to a view which must be designated as fanatical, partly because it would anticipate within human society a stage of perfection which simply lies beyond the earthly conditions of this present state, partly because it proudly maintains that a Christian need not fulfil all righteousness, need not perform what the civil community requires. So also in this respect they withdraw from following Christ; for Christ has, at least mediately, recognised the oath, when, during the spiritual trial He *answered* the high priest, who addressed to Him the question, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Blessed." By His answer, "Thou sayest it" (Matt. xxvi. 63 f.), He makes it clear that He placed himself under the law. In opposition to such fanatical doctrines, we hold firmly to what Luther says in his *Larger Catechism* on the Second Commandment, that "the oath is a right good work, whereby God is praised, the truth and right confirmed, lies repelled, people brought to peace, obedience rendered and strife abated; for God Himself then intervenes (*nam Deus ipse hic intervenit*), and divides right and wrong, bad and good from each other." Also the Apostle Paul in his epistles often uses such expressions as are akin to the oath: "I call God to witness upon

my soul" (2 Cor. i. 23), "God is my witness" (Rom. i. 9). Yet these utterances do not occur in the proper form of the oath, and rather admit of being placed beside the "Verily, verily, I say unto you," that often recurs in the mouth of our Lord.

### § 101.

Of great weight is the form in which the oath is made. To be rejected is the *Execration*, or that form of oath in which the swearer challenges God to punish him for ever if he swear falsely, and so, as it were, hypothetically (conditionally) curses himself, will be eternally damned, puts his eternal salvation in pawn. Such a swearing is presumptuous and irreligious, for thus man dare not as against God dispose of himself; and here that word of Christ applies, "Thou canst not make a hair of thy head black or white." Man dare not prescribe to God in what way He is to punish him, and dare not cut off from himself the last exit of grace and mercy. The right form of the oath is this, that the man calls God to witness, confirms his utterance before the face of the Omniscient God, places himself under unconditional dependence on God, in the consciousness that God will punish the lie and all unrighteousness, and that he who swears falsely contracts God's displeasure and judgment. But this is by no means the same as when one himself appoints the punishment, and for a certain case renounces all and every mercy of God. The usual form employed in evangelical Christendom is this: "So help me God and His holy word." True, this formula also does not exclude the possibility of an interpretation by which it would contain a hypothetical self-cursing, a hypothetical renunciation of salvation. But its right meaning is this: "As truly as I set my trust in God and His holy word, as truly as I know that He is not mocked, and that I am liable to His righteous judgment if I swear falsely." To be vitally conscious of his dependence on God, to place oneself reverentially as well under His grace as under His justice, fully to commit one's own person and cause to Him, means something quite different from prescribing to God how He is to punish, setting a limit to His mercy, and therewith boasting of one's own righteousness and faithfulness, which is quite presumptuous, especially

in an oath of obligation and protestation. For who dare build in every relation upon his steadfastness, his faithfulness, and challenge God to weigh it? Germs of hypothetical self-cursing are found, indeed, in the Old Testament, for example in the exclamation, "The Lord do so to me," although in this only temporal, not eternal punishment is usually meant. But these germs were farther developed in later times by the Jews, and in the Jewish oaths there are found the most frightful self-cursings, the crassest challenges of the divine judgments.

### § 102.

As the oath only finds its justification in a necessity of human society, namely, in the exigency of mutual distrust, it ought also only to be employed where there is an actual exigency, or in affairs of great weight. If now-a-days in the sphere of civil relations the oath is required on the most unimportant occasions, that is a rude and irksome abuse. And it contains a bitter complaint against the moral conditions of society; for society is declared to be demoralized if one cannot in such cases be satisfied with the simple yes and no, but must at once flee to the oath. And it is a surprising phenomenon, which bears a very serious character, that the state, which for the rest has been occupying a more and more indifferent position towards religion and the Church, and in so many respects has yielded to an irreligious humanism, that thinks the state can fitly in its institutions do without religion, yet has not been able to set a limit to the too frequent and unseemly swearing, the ever-recurring invoking of God and His holy word,—a custom which in recent times has become still more prevalent in consequence of all the political oaths which the constitutional system, with its constant changes, has brought with it. The fact is, that notwithstanding its indifferentism, the state cannot stand without the religious guarantee. But it is overlooked that the *separate* guarantee, namely the oath, becomes void of meaning when we are indifferent to the *great* guarantee, namely the religiousness of the people, which must have its support and nourishment in the existing institutions. The more the great and all-embracing guarantee is present, the seldomer will one need to resort to the auxiliary

guarantee; but the more effectual will one also be able to make this. The too-frequently applied oath does away with itself in its meaning, and the feeling of truth in the people is blunted. It may be said that the much swearing which is employed even in purely civil relations, and which for conscientious officials, who must require the oath on very unimportant occasions, becomes an oppressive burden, is itself an exigency; for the light requirement of the oath occasions light offers to swear, and light swearings and perjuries; of which there are many and ever more numerous examples of the most frightful kind.

The frightfulness of perjury consists in this, that the swearer not only plays with a single truth, but with the truth itself, and mocks God. Perjury has much akin to the unworthy partaking of the sacrament. He that swears falsely, swears judgment to himself. The most earnest preparation is therefore certainly most needful before one proceeds to take an oath. To break an oath which is sworn of free will and with full consciousness, is a terrible faithlessness, not only towards men, but towards God and one's own conscience. Yet there are cases in which the swearer may be loosed from the obligation of an oath, when the absolution takes place on the part of the authority entitled thereto, who is usually he or those in whose interest the obligation was undertaken; for example, the king, as representative of the state.<sup>1</sup> A forced oath, or one obtained by craft, is a nullity; and an oath by which one is bound to do something in conflict with God's commandment, is not to be kept, but to be repented of. When Herod (Mark vi. 22-29) caused John the Baptist to be executed, because he held himself bound by a light oath, he heaped sin on sin. And when those Jews (Acts xxiii. 21) "bound themselves with a curse neither to eat nor to drink till they had killed Paul," this was a fanatical oath, that only deserved to be repented of.

<sup>1</sup> How far there are in human society such exigencies, in which men may feel themselves constrained in their conscience to free themselves afterwards from an oath that they have taken, is a question that can only be fitly answered by a special investigation of these exigencies themselves.

## § 103.

“Put away lying, and speak the truth” (Eph. iv. 25). This command can be carried through in the various relations of life only in the measure that the personality itself is a true and pure one. But the interior truth of the Christian personality is as a free utterance of life and fruit of the Spirit, one with love, and this must also be mirrored in the discourse of each Christian. When we say, then, that the discourse of a Christian should bear the impress of truth, we say likewise that it must bear the spiritual impress of Christian humanity. Therefore the apostle requires that all “corrupt communication” remain far from the Christian (Eph. iv. 29), that the speech of Christians be “*with grace* seasoned with salt, that they may know how to answer every man” (Col. iv. 6), whereby he requires that a certain beauty of soul be expressed in speech. In regard to the so-called sins of the tongue, our Lord says that “men shall give account in the day of judgment for every ‘idle,’ unbecoming word that they have spoken” (Matt. xii. 36).

This warning against unbecoming, improper words, and the reference to the day of judgment, must fill our soul with holy fear. Quakers and pietistic parties have indeed thought to secure themselves against the future judgment by limiting their speech to what is indispensable, by speaking as little as possible about worldly things, where the improper ever lies so near, but chiefly speaking only of the holy, of things belonging to the kingdom of God; and again they would only speak of these things in Christ’s own words, which of course can never possibly be idle and improper. The Trappists decided, in order to escape all such words and the reckoning at the last day, to say nothing whatever, and imposed a silence upon themselves which is only occasionally broken by this one utterance, *Memento mori!* That these conceptions of the matter are erroneous and unsound is evident. Christ did not need to send to His disciples “the Spirit of truth,” if it was His will to bind them to a mere repetition of His own words. And when the apostle says that “he is a perfect man who offendeth not in word” (Jas. iii. 2), this is the very opposite of the view of the Trappists, that he is the



perfect man who keeps silence, entirely abstains from the use of speech. What is to be understood by idle or unbecoming words will best be perceived when we ask, What words are becoming, or when is our speech as it ought to be? The answer to this must be, that our speech is as it ought to be when it is the expression of the truth; that our speech, whether it treat of the highest and holy, or of every-day social and civil relations of life, is not only as to its contents (or objectively) true, but also a personal truth in ourselves. Further, our speech is what it ought to be when it is not merely an expression of the truth, but the truth is also spoken in love; not as if love should always be in our mouth, but spoken in such a way that the other feels that love yet dwells in the inmost ground of our soul. And, in fine, our speech is what it ought to be when it is a prudent speech, which is governed throughout by the Spirit, when we neither say too much nor too little, say all at the right time and in the right place, and when the speech proceeds from an inward peace, from a rest, an inner equipoise of our being, which is communicated to those with whom we speak. From this it follows that all untrue speech, all unloving, all imprudent and passionate speech, is also idle and unbecoming, of which an account will have to be given at the day of judgment. And by untrue speech we mean not only the speech that spreads errors, nor words of blasphemy and mockery that are cast forth by haters of Christ, as then the Pharisees said of the Lord that He cast out the devils by Beelzebub, nor manifest lying and slander. We mean also by this, words without inner conviction, empty modes of speech and hollow sounds, which are without root in man's spirit and mind, spiritless echoes of the views and words of others, the mere *phrase* which is not least common in the present phenomena-loving time, as well when it regards the highest and the holiest, as things of social life. But the word or testimony of truth may also become an idle, improper word, when the truth is not spoken in love, when it is spoken without love and in bitterness, more adapted to embitter than to improve, to break the bruised reed, to quench the smoking wick, which the Lord will have spared. From words of truth as of love, idle words proceed, when we, without thought, in

passion and anger, let ourselves be carried beyond bounds. Perhaps we meant no great harm; and yet it may be the imprudently uttered word has evoked a great stir and confusion in the circle in which we were called to work; or it has wounded, offended, broken a human heart, which yet we would not have broken. If we try ourselves and our surroundings by this rule, we will no doubt, from our own experience, affirm that word of the apostle, that he is a perfect man that offends not in word, and that Christ alone, our redeemer and our example, is this perfect man.

And as regards the Saviour's utterance, that we shall give account at that day for every idle word that we have spoken, it must be conceived in the same point of view as when the Saviour says that we shall be judged on that day according to our works. Word and work are inseparable. A man's words and a man's works are, as it were, an embodiment of that which dwells within him, are like a mirror in which the deepest mind of a man, his position of heart to God and the truth, is reflected. On the day of judgment this mirror shall be placed before us, that we may see ourselves, that all the works that we have done in this world, all the words that we have spoken, so far as they had a meaning for our conscience, may appear to us at once in a great compressed remembrance, in which we see our whole life as in a moment, in an instant, before us, and as in a great picture, shall perceive what was the kernel of our inner man. For words and works shall not be judged for themselves and separated from the sentiments: it is *the man himself, the whole man*, who shall be judged by his word and work. None of us will be able to stand in this judgment, except we then know *good words*, which we must have already practised in this life, except we know a word of faith in the forgiveness of sins, of justification by faith, a word of prayer springing up from the inmost heart: "God be merciful to me a sinner." But in following Christ we must endeavour to expel idle, bad words more and more from our life, in yielding ourselves to the guidance of Him who came to redeem us also from idle words, to reform also and renew our speech, so that it may become a speech of truth, of love, and of Christian prudence. It is by no means difficult to have truth without love, and

just as little difficult is it to have love without truth. But the healthy union of both is the difficulty, which the history of doctrinal controversies teaches only too clearly, where men have striven about the truth in unloving, bitter, unseemly polemic, where so often, instead of "the truth in love," rather truth ("pure doctrine") meets us in hatred, in pride, in envy, revenge, and so on.

We add yet further, that no one will be able to prove the statement that jokes and wit are excluded from Christian speech. Rather its æsthetic value is to be allowed to this free play. But the æsthetic must have its presupposition in the ethical, must be regulated by it; for in the opposite case, however brilliant, it falls under the category of the idle and unbecoming.

*Philanthropy and Love of Righteousness.*

§ 104.

As the love of man is inseparably connected with love of truth, it is so likewise with the love of righteousness. This love of righteousness is not only love of the undefined ideal of righteousness, but of Christ, the personal righteousness of God, to Him who is already designated in the Old Testament as "the Righteous Servant of the Lord" (Isa. xl.), who carries out God's cause on earth, and for the sake of this His work must undergo so great sufferings. When we designate Christ as the personal righteousness, we do not mean by this only the distributive or judicial and awarding righteousness, but especially His personal perfection or normality, in which all elements of His personal life stand in the right relation to each other, so that no single thing asserts itself at the cost of the whole, where all opposites are brought to harmonious agreement (compare the General Part, § 88). In loving Him as righteousness, we love Him even as love itself. For righteousness is love filled with truth, *ordered* by wisdom. Righteousness requires that all and each be loved according to its true worth. It opposes all false and inordinate love, unveils all seeming worthiness, judges all that does not occupy its proper place. As the

personal righteousness, Christ has entered into a world of unrighteousness, where, along with the disturbance of the relation to God, with the unrighteous position towards God into which man has fallen,—withholding from God His glory, honouring the creature ever more than the Creator, regarding that which is not God as his God,—into the human relations also an infinitude of injustice and unrighteousness has penetrated. For everywhere and ever again we find that what in itself is the superior has become something subordinate; and conversely, that the right boundaries are perverted or obliterated in the great confusion of sinfulness. He has appeared to erect again the true kingdom of righteousness, which is not different from the kingdom of truth and love, a kingdom which must continually fight its way through great humiliation and misconception, and will only be completed under “the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. iii. 13), which means not only that righteous men will dwell there, but that there all will be in its right place and in its right order. The love of man in following Christ must therefore not only testify of the truth of Christ, but also *work* for His righteous cause on earth, for which we are only fit when we yield ourselves to the Spirit who “convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment” (John xvi. 8), but never ceases to be the Spirit of grace and of love.

Not only with words, but especially also through work and walk, as well in private as in public life, must a Christian, according to the measure of his calling and his gifts, co-operate for this, that the righteous cause of Christ may be upheld and advanced. The gospel and the kingdom of Christ makes an ideal, a higher, a spiritual claim of right, not merely on individuals, but on the community; not merely on the Church, as far, that is, as its guidance is committed to human hands; but also on the state, the family, the school. But the cause of Christ is constantly “held down in unrighteousness” (Rom. i. 18). The world now effects its active opposition to the cause of Christ through open attacks, now its passive, in unutterable indifference, thick-skinned insusceptibility, a security and thoughtlessness that disregards all that is higher. As regards her position to the

world, the Church of Christ at all times stands, in one or the other respect, like the widow in the gospel to the unjust judge (Luke xviii.). In the struggle which never ceases in human society between those who work for the cause of God and those who are endeavouring to carry out their own unrighteousness and that of the world,—including also the falsifiers of the righteousness of God's kingdom,—in this struggle every Christian must stand at his post, in the position and in the calling wherein he is called. He must face unrighteousness, must, standing on the foundation of truth,—to speak with Fichte,—oppose the sword's point to the world, but not the passive flatness of want of character. Just in times like the present, in which enmity against the cause of Christ has risen so high, true love to men, whether to individuals or to the community, will not admit of being shown otherwise than by waging an earnest struggle against unrighteousness, without fearing persecution for righteousness' sake. What we, then, likewise have to resist in ourselves is, on the one hand, the temptation to mistake our personal affair, our own perhaps one-sided and untried view, for the cause of Christ; on the other hand, the temptation to the fear of man and cowardice, ease and comfort, which above all things will have rest and good days instead of campaigning in the unrest of the Church militant.

But while the central relation to the holy, to the kingdom of Christ, is that wherein especially Christian love of righteousness must assert itself, yet it is to spread out from this centre on all sides, to all points of the periphery. We are to endeavour "to fulfil *all* righteousness," to perform all that is right.

#### § 105.

All must be convinced that righteousness, as that sentiment and mode of action that gives each one his own (*Sum cuique*), is the indispensable condition for every human society, that without righteousness no human social relation whatever is conceivable. It is also by no means limited to civil life, to the mere external sphere of justice, although it has here, no doubt, its chief sphere. Not only in civil life are we to respect the personal rights of our neighbour, his life and his



health, his property, his honour; are not merely to guard and keep in all civil relations most conscientiously the limits prescribed by the law, show probity, honesty, and honour in dealing and walk; in no business, in no relation, take advantage of our neighbour; abhor all fraud, not only the coarse but also the fine, which in our days has developed itself to an incredible extent, and which is even practised by people of whom one would not expect it. But righteousness extends to *all* departments of life; for in each of them it is required, even in a higher, the religious and moral sense, that we do to men what is right, and give them what is theirs. How one is to show to each the respect and regard that belongs to him, especially how one is to take up the cause of those injured in their rights, and that with a purely moral unselfish procedure; how one is to judge of the dealings of others, their works, excellences, and faults; how one is to be indignant at this or that phenomenon, or to greet it with approbation; how one feels injured by this or that, and is offended at it,—all such things belong to the wide domain of righteousness, though they may fall outside the external sphere of justice. Men commit against each other thousands of injustices that can be brought in question before no juridical tribunal.

The more closely we consider these finer definitions, it becomes the clearer that righteousness and love go together. that righteousness can only gain the right character of spirituality by means of love, or—inasmuch as in living together with so many men, an intimate communion with all is impossible—at least through *kindness* and *benevolence*. Where righteousness is exercised without kindness and benevolence, where respect is only had to that which can be demanded by the so-called strict justice, where one in mere accord with duty only grants as much to others as they can require of us, there also it is only imperfectly exercised. For then all the circumstances are never taken into consideration; and, above all, what is individual in the relation and the relative human individuality remains out of account. But what is individual cannot be known when it is measured only by the abstract rule of the law, but only when it is viewed with the eye of love, of kindness, of good-will. Therefore all righteousness must be exercised in the spirit of love and kindness. Even in

the sphere of external justice, *mildness* must constantly modify strict justice, that an injustice may not be committed through a one-sided maintenance of the letter (*summum jus, summa injuria*).

In opposition to the assertion of strict justice, by which many believe themselves to have fulfilled all that others can require of them, the exhortation of the apostle bears, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8). "Love worketh no ill to her neighbour" (ver. 10). That love does no ill to its neighbour may indeed appear a trifle, but is in truth *much*, because the observance of every divine "Thou shalt not" is contained in it. But, on the other hand, the apostle who calls love the fulfilling of the law, tells us that our mutual behaviour should not be that of external conformity to the law, but that of love; because we not only *owe* this or that one to another, but ourselves, our heart. Love itself is the deepest claim of right which we, as members of one single great family, have on each other. Therefore we are ever to remain indebted in love one to another; for the relation of person to person is an eternal relation; and never will we be able to say, Now we have paid our debt of love, now we have loved each other enough, and can close our hearts one to another. While love spreads itself over the various circles of society, over those nearer and farther, and thus must also express itself under a great variety of limitations or closer definitions (as kindness, good-will, respect, moderation), yet one thing remains throughout its chief impress, namely, *that she seeks not her own* (Phil. ii. 4).

### § 106.

The unity we have here in view of righteousness and love, righteousness and kindness, is the true *humanity* in the relation between man and man. It may be evinced in all social relations, but especially unfolds its fulness in relation to the *inequalities* in human society. To abolish the necessary differences within the same is by no means the object of Christian humanity. Nay, that would even be opposed to righteousness, which requires differences, superiority and subordination. Thus it will not abolish that necessary inequality

that exists between masters and servants, teachers and scholars, superiors and subordinates, rich and poor; and will just as little set aside the differences of human individualities, human talents, the difference between the highly gifted and the less gifted. Amid all these inequalities, Christian humanity endeavours to bring forward the essential equality, seeks everywhere the *man*, the free personality in the image of God, will harmonize these inequalities, which so often sunder men in enmity, to a free mutual relation, in which is to be developed a behaviour of mutual service, affording help and support, supplying mutual deficiencies, such as can never be brought to pass by any compulsion of law. Just because righteousness teaches us to regard love as a debt which we constantly owe to each other, is Christian love essentially to be conceived under the point of view of *service* to which we are bound in mutual self-sacrifice and self-denial. Ministering love, ministering humanity, is the very opposite of an inclination that is deeply rooted in the sinful nature of man, namely, the inclination *egoistically* to lord it over others; as it is also opposed to another kindred inclination, in virtue of which a man will neither rule nor serve, but in his egoism simply stand *independent* on all sides, unconcerned about others, not mixed up with others, that he may live only to himself, and enjoy the undisturbed repose of existence. They both stand in contradiction to what is just, as the normal. As little as we should rule over one another in the spirit of egoism, just as little should we in the same spirit be independent of each other. We are destined to serve one another. And not only are the lower classes to serve the higher, but the higher, yea, those in the highest places, are called to serve those beneath them. This proposition is formally acknowledged by all, yet in actual life it is too often denied. Thus there have been despotic rulers who willingly called themselves by eminence the foremost servants of the state; and the Pope, who without doubt would rule over all, especially would dominate all consciences, yet calls himself, as is well known, the servant of the servants of God (*servus servorum Dei*). Yet, however evil the practical result, still the thought which is confessed is thoroughly correct, and perfectly agrees with that word of Christ, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the

younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke xxii. 26). Only in the measure in which ministering love and humanity attains to mastery in free *reciprocity*, not only between individuals, but also between the different classes of society with their various interests, will the social problems admit of solution, will injustice more and more be banished from human society.

### § 107.

As a shadow of ministering love and humanity, *politeness* appears in social life, which is the merely formal side of human conduct, of human reciprocity. In the forms of politeness men testify to each other their respect, and make known that they are each other's "servants," by visible signs of "devotion," by behaving to each other respectfully and with attention. Now, were not politeness too often an exterior without a corresponding interior, a shadow without body, yea, a mask, it could avail as a significant symbol of the love that seeketh not her own. And it still remains a symbol in so far as it points to a universal *principle*, whose power over men asserts itself externally, even when they afford it no entrance into their hearts. Were there a history of politeness from the most ancient times to the present, such a history would show us how men, in constant progression, have sought to symbolize their consciousness of the conduct that should mutually take place among them, so that there has been a symbolizing as well of the principles of despotism as also of caste, of slavery, and so on; it would show us how that first, through the principle of Christian humanity, & politeness is founded which at the same time co-exists with honour, with personal self-respect, and with due respect for others, and which makes us conscious that politeness is not merely to be shown to *some*, but to *all*. Where politeness corresponds to its idea, it is an outward sign of humanity, which in every one respects the man as such, and by which men feel themselves called upon freely to perform services to each other, not merely because the one needs the other, but for the sake of conscience, a voluntariness and reciprocity, without which all civil determinations of right were impotent and insufficient

to hold human society together. But the right voluntariness and reciprocity in this ministering conduct is yet only produced by the spirit of the love of Christ, only produced in those who believe in the Redeemer, who came not to be ministered unto, but Himself to minister (Matt. xx. 28), and who on that last evening washed His disciples' feet for an example to them, that they also should wash one another's feet (John xiii.). Here is the holy centre from which the effects emanate to the utmost circumference of human society. True humanity in its lowest as in its highest forms is *Christian* humanity.

We cannot, therefore, regard as apt and adequate the definition which Rothe in his *Ethik* (III. 590) gives of the idea of politeness, that it is the most abstract and lowest form of modesty. We understand it as the most abstract, lowest, and most peripheric form of ministering humanity (including modesty), which in its compass embraces also benevolence and self-*imparting* kindness.

This deeper principle glances out in a peculiar way from human *greetings*, not only from the way and manner in which we greet, but especially from the words employed in doing so. True, a greeting is reckoned one of the most unimportant and merely formal things, and is given and received with the greatest indifference. How thoughtlessly does one now say "Good-day," and then again "Farewell!" Yet the formal points back to a reality lying deeper. A historical consideration teaches us that different views of life, different conceptions of that which gives to human life its worth and meaning, different ideas of the highest good that men felt called upon to wish each other, were expressed in the words with which in the different ages, and among the different peoples, they greeted each other.<sup>1</sup> The Greek view attains expression in the "*Χαίρε*" (that is, Joy to thee). But the Greeks, in wishing each other joy, understand thereby joy in all that is fair and good, joy in life itself, in life's glory and splendour, joy in a human life that stands in harmony with itself and all its surroundings. This to the Greeks is the highest good. The Roman more practical view of life clearly resounds both in its "*Salve*" (May you be well) and in its "*Vale*" (Be

<sup>1</sup> Compare Ernst Curtius, *Alterthum und Gegenwart: Der Gruss*, § 237 ff.



healthy). The Romans wish each other not the æsthetic joy in the glory and grace of life, but health and strength, as the *conditions* of an active human existence, as the things that qualify for practical life. The Hebrew and Christian view is reflected in the "Peace be with thee and thy house," known to us all. Believers wish each other the peace of the Lord, the peace which can only be bestowed upon us from above. Christ attaches great importance to greetings, therefore He says to His disciples, "When ye come into an house, first say, Peace be to this house; and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again" (Luke x. 5 f., comp. John xiv. 27).

When the religious greeting of peace means more than a form, it is one with the *blessing*, and the blessing again one with *intercession*. That one man blesses another, means that he, praying to God for him, utters the good word over him, that he in prayer wishes for him a share of the grace of which he himself has become partaker.<sup>1</sup> When such a blessing on the side of him who blesses proceeds from an earnest energetic will, and is received by the other with his inmost mind, it is no mere impotent wish, but has a real effect, which is symbolized by the *laying on of hands*, which means a communication, a transference of the gift for which God is invoked, on the head of the other. But the curse also may in certain circumstances and conditions have a corresponding real effect, and is by no means always an empty sound or mere word. In the history of human greetings, the *kiss* has also its meaning. We often read in the apostolic epistles the exhortation to the first Christians, "Greet ye one another with an holy kiss" (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14, in the last named passage, "with the kiss of love"). In the historical connection into which these exhortations transport us, the kiss is the sign of fraternal fellowship, in certain circumstances the sign of reconciliation and forgiveness (the kiss of peace). In the old church it had its place in the sacred ceremonies, especially in the holy communion. But also, apart from its connection with the holy and the highest, the same usage occurs as a natural greeting of friendship on

<sup>1</sup> Wuttke, *Christliche Sittenlehre*, II. 353.

meeting and parting, and in other relations of life as a seal of friendship. But there is also a Judas kiss. And as there is a *look* which glows with the blessing of kindness and love, whose magically beneficent effect is felt deep within the soul, so there is also an evil eye, which, with the falseness of the serpent, shoots the arrows of ill-will, hatred, and temptation, arrows against whose poison and impurity one must indeed be on his guard.

### § 108.

Akin to politeness is *helpfulness*, which is a subordinate element in ministering love. Helpfulness is an unselfish readiness to help others, with the power at our disposal, to the *means* which they need for their personal objects. He who, for instance, in a momentary pecuniary difficulty helps another with a loan, which the other can repay when convenient, or he who offers me a book for a scientific undertaking, that I sought in vain in public libraries, or who at the sacrifice of his time, and without reward, performs a work for me, is helpful. But helpfulness as such has respect only to the *means*, while ministering love has paid diligent regard to the moral object. There is therefore also a helpfulness to immoral objects. And again there is also a pressing and burdensome helpfulness to moral objects.

### § 109.

In order to form ourselves to social humanity, it is especially, and before all else, needful to develop and exercise in ourselves the *acknowledgment* of the personal worth of others, as well as the acknowledgment of that which is proper to them as a divine gift,—and something proceeding from God and given by Him is in every man,—as also of that which the others have inwardly gained (wrought out) and developed for themselves. The true recognition is not forced, so to say compelled,—for then it were not different from respect, which is something involuntary,—but is quite voluntary, rejoices in the good present in others, and regards it with hearty satisfaction. The recognition of the worth and of the excellences of others develops *modesty* in us, or the consciousness of our own

limitation, whereby, however, the consciousness of our own worth (of our knowledge and ability) within this limitation is by no means excluded. But in order to be able to recognise the worth of others, it is necessary to develop a sense for the most various individualities with which we come into relations, a sense for the manifold gifts and talents, a problem which the Apostle Paul discusses in regard to the life of the Church, in his doctrine of the many gifts and the one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4-31; Rom. xii. 3-8; Eph. iv. 3-13). This sense for human individualities is more or less bound in us all, because we are, as it were, caught in our own individuality, and therefore disposed with the standard thereof to measure and value all other individualities. The condition of right reciprocity (of right behaviour towards each other) is therefore the mutual understanding of individualities. Without this it will never—and all the less the more pronounced a personality is—come to a mutual receiving and giving. There are many men from whom we could receive much, and from whom we yet receive nothing, because we require something else from them than they can give, and we are insusceptible for this latter. And there are many to whom we could give what would be of value to them, but who yet receive nothing from us, because we give it in the wrong way. If, that is, we would serve others, we must be able with self-denial to transfer ourselves into their individuality, to serve them in such a way as agrees with their peculiarity. But the natural man in us has a propensity to seek satisfaction only for its especial peculiarity; it seeks its own, goes not beyond itself, does not transport itself into that which is the other's.

In regard to unusual excellences, recognition becomes *admiration*. But only for moral excellences can we in admiration also feel *love*. True, indeed, we can wonder at great talents, as we must maintain in general that no man whom God Himself has distinguished can be indifferent to us; but we simply cannot feel love to mere talents and mental gifts purely as such. In respect to the men from whom we have received, whether immediately or mediately, what served to rejoice and in any way to advance us, our recognition rises to *thankfulness*, to personal acknowledgment for what has been received, and to the necessity to prove our

acknowledgment by deed. In very many cases this is impossible to us, especially when great mental gifts, for instance, higher knowledge and strengthening of the inner man, have become ours through certain more eminent men; and then our thankfulness must be limited to the feeling of love and piety, perhaps also to the expression of it, as far as opportunity is offered for the latter. But it is our duty, in respect to the greater as to the less, to strive to develop in ourselves as well susceptibility as thankfulness, thereby to fight against our insusceptibility, our natural unthankfulness, so as to become more attentive to ourselves and to all that occurs in us. Would we in truth love men, and thereby attain to the true joy of life, we must learn to recognise what is strange, to admire and be thankful for it. *Not* to recognise and value what is truly valuable, not to admire it, not to wish to thank for it, is a sentiment that leads to inward desolation and unfruitfulness. As in our relation to God the first thing is to comport ourselves as receivers and acceptors, so this is the first thing also in our relation to men. We begin with this, that we receive from parents and teachers; but this receptive relation is to be continued through the whole life, in our intercourse with the most various men, not only of the present but also of the past. He that will not receive from men, will not appropriate, will also never become adapted to give anything to men, or to do anything in truth for men. And as the beginning of all ungodliness and unrighteousness consists in this, that men refuse to recognise God, will not accept and appropriate His revelation, will not give thanks (Rom. i. 21), so this their ungodliness and unrighteousness is continued by this, that they refuse to that which is of divine origin in man the due recognition, nay, deny it. One of the most serious points of complaint, when once a reckoning is required of our life, will be this: to have neglected the recognition of the human, in pride or obstinate dislike, or else in mental torpor, in illiberality and pusillanimity to have mistaken men. The well-known Danish thinker and poet, Joh. Ludw. Heiberg, has said with great truth: "The greatest misfortune is not to have to dispense with recognition, but on the contrary to have failed to accord it to others; to have lived together and along with noble characters, with excellent spirits, but whom, without

respect, one overlooked as if they were everyday men, and only when it is too late to become aware of one's own blindness."<sup>1</sup> And it may be added that, in respect to the everyday men, so called, one is often apt to overlook or to ignore what before God is valuable in them.

It is an old complaint that so little thankfulness is found in the world, and that ingratitude is the world's reward. And indeed we have ever occasion anew to think of the ten lepers in the gospel, who had all implored the help of the Lord, who also had all been healed, but of whom only one turned back to give thanks, so that the Lord had to exclaim, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (Luke xvii. 11-19). This "Where are the nine?" recurs under many forms; and very frequently it is only a single Samaritan who offers his thanks. But he who will work according to the example of Christ, will not therefore grow weary to do good as far as and where he can. As disciples of Christ, we know that we are not to work for earthly reward, on which we can, from the nature of this world, only very uncertainly reckon, but that there is One who sees in secret the faithfulness with which we labour. And that is for ourselves the chief thing.

#### § 110.

What is said above of recognition admits of special application to *the Christian church-life*, with its various gifts of grace and services. We must here recall the word of the apostle concerning the many gifts and the one Spirit, his exhortation not to regard any single gift as alone valid and worthy, to hold in honour the weaker members also, because they are necessary for the whole. Much party spirit in the Church proceeds exclusively from the lack of recognition, while one recognises the revelation of the Spirit only in a single gift and a single prominent personality, but is blind to the revelation of the same Spirit in other gifts and other personalities. One has an eye only for a single colour, but is blind to the many various colours into which the one light breaks. One has only an ear for one tongue, but not for the many tongues through which the same Spirit bears witness to Himself.

<sup>1</sup> Heiberg, *Ueber Anerkennung*, Prose Works, IV. 497.



*Mercy.*

## § 111.

Christian philanthropy, in its unity with truth and righteousness, finds its climax, its crown, in *mercy*, the deep and hearty sympathy with human need, and likewise the will to help it. Mercy is often taken as equivalent to grace, but is in truth a more special determination of it. Grace is free love to those who have no claim on it as something deserved, is especially free love to sinners, to the unworthy. Mercy, again, is free love to the *wretched*, and regards even sin mainly under the point of view of human need and helplessness, regards it therefore in a milder light: it pities the misery of sin. This preponderant regard to helplessness, whether mental or bodily, finds expression in an old symbol of mercy, namely, *a naked child*, the most helpless of all creatures, which certainly, if no one pays heed to it, is also the most wretched of all creatures. In the heathen world true mercy was dead and unknown; in Israel only imperfectly known. But it was fully revealed in its spiritual and bodily meaning, when the kindness of God our Saviour, His *philanthropy*, appeared in Christ, and He redeemed us, the most helpless of all, *after His great mercy*. He whom we confess as our Saviour and example, is Himself the personal mercy here below. In Him, as our reconciler, each one of us is what he is of God's mercy; and incessantly we all need this mercy, in life and in death, and after death. But as Christ is our reconciler and mediator, He has likewise left us an example of mercy, in that His whole life on earth was only a life of merciful love, during which He heartily regarded all human misery, all our need, "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38). And with this example of mercy, He has also left us the prayer and exhortation of His mercy to succour the helpless: "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. For what ye have done to *one* of the least of these my brethren, ye have done unto me" (Matt. xxv. 35 ff.). We would not understand these

words in their full meaning, their whole range, if we supposed that they are to be understood exclusively of works of mercy in reference to external, bodily need. There are very many who do not need mere bodily help, but the more urgently need a spiritual food and refreshment, or thirst for a cup of water to refresh their languishing soul, or who need a spiritual clothing. The spiritual and bodily import of mercy, embracing the *whole* man, has also been at all times recognised in the Church, and is expressed especially in the efforts for foreign and home missions, in the loving zeal to help all the ignorant, who are still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, to rescue the lost and abandoned. But there is no relation of life in which the misery of this life does not appear in one form or other, in which there is not at some time room for manifestations of Christian mercy. As against those who set too narrow limits to the idea of mercy, and think that it is only to be mentioned when there is a high degree of bodily need, say like the need of that man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves—without appropriating the deeper, spiritual sense of this story;—in opposition to such a conception, we say, in the words of the old mystic,<sup>1</sup> “All poor, all sick, all heavy-laden, all the wretched, all sinners, all the misery that is and was and shall yet be in the world, gather all into thy heart’s hospital, and have mercy on them.” We know indeed that in the strictest sense of the word only One was fit for this, He, the heavenly Samaritan, who has had mercy on us *all*.

Mercy does no injury to truth and righteousness, but rather affirms and confirms them. It by no means closes its eyes to sin and guilt. It pities all creatures, all the misfortune and suffering with which they are surrounded. It would rescue what can be rescued, heal what can be healed, help and comfort whatever can be helped and comforted, mollify and mitigate wherever it is possible. A philanthropy without mercy, even in the case where truth and righteousness do not fail it, is not of the right kind, has—even if it show itself in more than one respect as humanity—not yet advanced beyond the cold region of the law and the letter, and is still far from that

<sup>1</sup> David von Augsburg, in the 13th century. See Fr. Pfeiffer, *Deutsche Mystiker*, I. 340.

spiritual freedom, that self-determination from the inmost heart, which constitute the highest, the essential likeness to God. For God shows the freest self-determination proceeding from His inmost depth of being, moves in the fullest sense of the word after His heart, *not* so much in His creative, as rather in His redeeming love, that lays hold of the lost. And also human love, that is, truth and righteousness being presupposed, shows itself in its highest freedom when it appears as mercy.

“The quality of mercy is not strain’d;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”<sup>1</sup>

### § 112.

Collisions between mercy and righteousness are exclusively founded in the entanglements of this life, and likewise in the personal imperfection which is not able to fulfil various requirements at the same time. We refer, for example, to the cases of collision which we gave in the General Part (§ 128), after Ferguson and Jacobi’s statements: A boy lay almost naked on the grave of his recently dead father: he saw a man who was just going to his creditor to pay according to promise a debt that had fallen due; the man raised the boy up, and applied to his benefit the sum which his creditor was expecting. The latter was thus disappointed. In itself we certainly do not disapprove this work of mercy; but must at the same time lament that that creditor was disappointed, and had to suffer wrong. Such collisions, which remind us of our personal imperfection, and the bad dependence in which we find ourselves through our own fault, should not only teach us this, that it is of little use to us to have fulfilled all requirements of all external righteousness, as long as we withdraw ourselves from those of mercy; but likewise they should call on us, as far as in us lies, so to arrange our relations that we can satisfy the requirement of righteousness as well as that of mercy. In God righteousness and mercy are found in the most perfect harmony. God does not exercise mercy, as

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, Act iv. Scene 1.

many falsely assume, by drawing a stroke through His righteousness, but so that by means of the atoning work of Christ He has made it possible to Himself to show mercy without injuring His righteousness.

Genuine mercy shows itself in an infinitude of modifications, shows itself in many situations of life and relations, so that its name is not mentioned at all, but it appears with veiled face, as in incognito, in order the more easily to give to the sufferer what it has to give; it is akin to humility, which will not be seen by men. It observes the finest and most individual regards; and for this very reason ethics can express no more than the most general points of view about its procedure.

In relation to the sick and deeply troubled, our mercy manifests itself by this, that we not only extend help and support to them as we are able, but also, as far as we are fit for it, and the others are susceptible of it, *comfort* them with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2 Cor. i. 4). A humanity that is without Christianity can indeed bring temporal help, can show compassion and sympathy, but cannot truly comfort, can at most give a direction to resignation, to submission under accident and fate, under blind necessity. But the sufferer is only then comforted when he learns to "humble himself not under fate, but under the hand of God, that He may exalt him in due time, when he learns to cast all his care upon God, because He careth for him" (1 Pet. v. 6, 7). In comforting, the important thing is not only the contents of the comfort,—however weighty this may be,—but the manner and way in which the comfort is applied. The art of comforting is by no means an easy one. With earnestness it must combine love and forbearance; for a bruised reed requires to be touched with a tender hand. The comforter must not only work with the power of the word, but with the pacifying power of the personality. At times the still, silent sympathy we show to mourners may operate more beneficially than words. This appears also to be contained in the saying of the apostle, "Weep with those that weep" (Rom. xii. 15). Even in this, that the mourner is not alone with his mourning, but that others sincerely share it, feel it also, sit beside him and weep with him, there lies a

mitigation, a lightening of the burden, which he is no more bearing alone. The friends of Job comforted him far better in the first seven days, while they sat silent beside him, than afterwards, when they produced their ill-considered grounds of comfort, which changed into accusations.

Towards the distressed and poor, mercy appears as *beneficence*, which seeks to remove not merely the bodily need, but that of the soul, the moral evil. True care of the poor must have an educating character, and seek not only to help the poor to food, clothing, and shelter, but to lead them to work and pray. We therefore say with Vincent de Paul, with Elizabeth Fry, and all who have regarded and exercised the care of the poor from the standpoint of Christianity: the soul of the care of the poor is the care of the soul. It may also be maintained that it was chiefly care for the souls, the consciousness of the eternal destiny of man, whereby right sympathy for the poor, and care for them as a universal duty, was first introduced into the human race, and given effect to in the world. Heathenism felt itself—as may be especially seen in heathen Rome—under no obligations whatever in this respect, but left the poor to their own fate; and the highest point that Roman morality attained was this, that with Cicero it gave the advice to impart to the stranger, provided one could oneself dispense with the gift. But just because Christianity teaches that God is love and mercy, that each man has an infinite value in God's eyes, and is destined to eternal bliss, that this life is a state of trial, a preparation for the future, therefore it also obliges every man to mercy towards his suffering brethren, in order that each one may do his part by personal sacrifices, that they may become partakers of the earthly conditions for a higher life. Just because the life of each man upon earth is to be a life for the kingdom of God, this object must be prayed and wrought for, that each man on earth may have his *daily bread*. But if there is no kingdom of God, if God is not worshipped as love and mercy, if man has no eternal destiny, and human individualities are only temporal and vanishing, then the chief reason has fallen away why one should sacrifice himself and what he has in order to help the poor. One cannot well see why it should be necessary to make such sacrifices; and the saying of the Roman



poet Ovid may reckon upon applause in the widest circles: "Wherefore should one give anything to the poor? One deprives oneself of what one gives, and only helps the other to prolong a wretched life." It might perhaps be said to this, that even if there is no future life, one must endeavour that all shall enjoy the present life as much as possible. But in practice this assumption does not hold good, because the rich, if they possess their treasures only here, will certainly not have the self-denial to divide their goods with the poor, and therefore will hardly engage in ministering love. In practice it will not be otherwise than in the old heathenism, where the rich sought to establish themselves as securely and independently as possible, and where it essentially belonged to their repose and independence not to trouble themselves about their suffering neighbours. Since the Christian Church, which from its earliest beginnings, in all quietness, cared for the poor, has become a power in the world, there arose as with one stroke a multitude of various benevolent institutions for the poor and suffering, as something hitherto unknown to the world. The Emperor Julian, from his heathen-humanistic standpoint, first made the attempt to establish the like in opposition to the Christians, inasmuch as the benevolent institutions of the Christians seemed to him like a standing reproach against heathenism. It was the care for the salvation of souls whereby the Christians were impelled to this care for bodily welfare; and this point of view, this principle, must henceforth dominate the Christian care of the poor.

Now as regards the individual Christian, he must, after the measure of his gifts, as of his external position in life, enter into a personal relation to the poor as far as possible, that his influence upon them may also become personal. And here circumstances and relations may occur of so delicate a nature, that it is an art as well to give in the right way as in the right way to receive, which only the Spirit of Christ teaches. But as those who possess the right gift for the help of the poor cannot possibly enter into a personal relation with many at the same time, and as in our complicated social relations, and with the great mass of poverty, it may easily happen that our beneficence assumes an accidental character, and sinks to mere almsgiving, it is of importance that the care of the poor be

organized, as is the case in the many voluntary societies that have been formed for this object. As far as such societies work with the right means and in the right spirit, it is the duty of the individual to support them to the utmost of his power.

Of equivocal moral worth is all such beneficence as is careless in the choice of the means to reach its end. As examples we mention the means so favoured and so frequently employed in our days,—the performing of plays and concerts, the holding of a lottery or a bazaar for the good of the poor, or for another charitable or even Christian object. By such operations one declares at bottom to the public: “As you are notoriously so egoistic and so sensuous that you cannot be expected to do good even without the prospect of personal advantage, we will hereby furnish you with an egoistic motive which may induce you to the good to which you are simply not to be brought by the pure and unalloyed motive of philanthropy.” To reach the good object, one uses a means by which the moral motive is defiled. It will indeed be replied that, as the world is as it is, in many cases one will not obtain a more plentiful support otherwise than in this way. The dollars come in at least, and the poor are helped. Yet hereupon one cannot but remember that even if the poor are helped, yet the charity itself by which help is given has an extremely doubtful value. Christ says, “When thou givest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” (Matt. vi. 3). But here we have precisely the opposite. With the one hand a gift is presented to the poor, and the other is stretched out to receive the reward for it, be it a ticket for a comedy, or a lottery ticket, and so on. However many take part in this well-meaningly (*bona fide*), yet it is to be wished that this impure form of charity were displaced by another and pure one. At any rate, it may not be superfluous to recall to mind that this form of charity is very imperfect, that one is here on a very low step, and must be conscious of it. The individual, however, must decide, according to his personal moral standpoint, how far he can and dare engage in such things without self-contradiction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rothe, *Ethik*, III. 509: “This method is indeed an insulting defilement of charity. To seek to allure from a man a gift of love by means of a bait for his egoism, is a wretched absurdity.—He who in good faith so exercises charity,

## § 113.

In relation to human sinfulness, which meets us even from without in so many forms, and burdens us, mercy manifests itself as *forbearance*. Forbearance is patience with the *moral* imperfections of men. As God has forbearance with us in His heart and shows it, temporizes with us, and grants us time, so we also are to be forbearing towards men, and to accustom ourselves to put up with, and bear with much from them, without giving them up. In view of universal human sinfulness, we should cultivate the concord and peacefulness that prevents all needless conflict, and is the opposite of quarrelsomeness, choler, positiveness, and obstinacy, and therefore is not possible without humility and *gentleness*. Gentleness (soft mind) is the power of love to quench uprising anger, to curb the passionate and hasty disposition. True, we are not to purchase peace for *every* price, and must not withdraw ourselves from the fight when this is necessary ("If it be possible, *as much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men," Rom. xii. 18). There is also a justified anger, a righteous indignation against the injustice of men, as we see in Christ, who wielded the scourge to expel the dealers and money-changers from the temple, and testified against the Pharisees in words of thunder (Matt. xxi. 12 f.; John ii. 14-17; Matt. xxiii. 13-39). But in the fight itself, precisely where righteous anger breaks forth, should gentleness and mildness approve themselves. Where insulted righteousness sends forth its lightnings and thunders, gentleness should show itself as the *hidden watcher*, placing bounds and limits: Thus far shalt thou come and no farther! as the quietly ruling power that hinders anger from degenerating into sinful wrath, an impure passion, an egoistic passionate-ness, and labours to secure that zeal and righteousness remain in the service of love. With the Saviour we find it always thus; but even in the greatest among His followers we find it only in an imperfect degree, whereof the history of religious

may still do so; but there are also those who in this way could only be *malà fide* charitable; and they are not to let themselves be deceived by a false dread of the seeming lack of love, to become untrue to their conviction that the end never can sanctify the means."

and ecclesiastical controversies, and even Luther's history, bears sufficient witness. Yet we ought all ever anew to strive after it. Calm gentleness is different from that stoical self-control and cold blood, which even in our days is so often praised in public, and especially in political characters, and which mainly springs from contempt of men—as, for instance, in a political assembly a famous statesman cried out to the raging and brutal opposition, "The utterance of your disapproval, gentlemen, cannot rise to the height of my contempt!"—but also from the fear of sacrificing his own dignity in the eyes of men. True gentleness, then, is self-control for the sake of love. It proceeds from love to men, from the anxiety that they, as only too easily happens, might be offended (that is, provoked to sin), and from the fear of sacrificing not merely personal dignity, but in undue anger at, and judging the egoism of others, of falling from love itself, which were the greatest injury and loss that we could suffer.

As against personal injuries, gentleness manifests itself in this, that we renounce all requiting of evil with evil, yea, are ready to endure injustice, in so far as we could only escape from a definite suffering by likewise making it impossible for us to overcome evil with good. Here is applicable the so often misunderstood saying of the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it was said (to them of old), eye for eye, tooth for tooth. But I say to you, that ye resist not evil; but if any one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also; and if any man will sue thee and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and if any one compel thee to go with him a mile, go with him twain" (Matt. v. 38-41). By these symbolical expressions the Lord will by no means say that the right of retribution is invalid within the sphere of civil righteousness, which would be as much as to say that the sphere of civil righteousness itself, yea, the state, should have an end. And this is the misunderstanding of the Quakers, who would infer from the words quoted that a Christian dare bring no action, perform no military service, not even employ the slightest defence in peril, but must in all frauds and insults continue purely passive. How incorrect this conception is, is shown by the personal example of our Lord. For as the history of the Passion, in the trial

before the high priest, brings Him before our eyes, one of the servants of the same strikes Him on the cheek, but He does not offer to him the other, but answers, "If I have spoken evil, prove it; but if I have spoken well, why smitest thou me?" (John xviii. 22 f.; compare Acts xxii. 25). It is as little the will of the Lord to impose needless sufferings on His disciples, as to condemn them to a mere "passivity." A Christian is never to suffer without at the same time in one or other sense fighting, namely, "the good fight" (2 Tim. iv. 7); is never to be passive without likewise being active. But here also our Lord will conduct His disciples from the bondage of the Mosaic law, under which the moral and the juridical, the religious and the civil, are bound together into immediate unity, over into His kingdom, in which not the external law of right is to determine all, but the evangelical command of love, where evil is to be overcome in another way than in the way of strict right and of retribution, namely, through the proper, inner might of good, that is, of love. Therefore He expresses the requirement of gentleness with more definiteness, that there be in a Christian an infinite *fountain* of gentleness, that in him the *possibilities* of gentle, peaceable love are never to be exhausted, that when we suffer wrong we must be ready and willing to suffer still greater wrong, provided that thus our suffering is the condition for the good fight, in which we are to overcome the evil with good (Rom. xii. 21). If we consider the Lord under His suffering, we can say that here, not indeed literally, but in a higher spiritual sense, the word has been fulfilled: "If any one smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left; and if any one compel you to go a mile, go with him twain." For at no station of His *Via Dolorosa* did He grow weary of suffering, was His gentleness and love of peace exhausted; at each of His stations of suffering He felt the impulse and power to endure also the following still greater sufferings, according to His Father's will, till all was fulfilled. And therefore that word is fulfilled even in Christ Himself in the highest degree, "The meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5). For in this very way, in the way of the cross, "He received the strong for a prey" (Isa. liii. 13), He founded His dominion over the world.



But gentleness and forbearance unite in mildness in judging and deciding. "Be merciful," says Christ; "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Luke vi. 36 f.). This word He speaks against the many unmerciful judgments which men pass upon each other, against the people who see "the mote in their brother's eye, but see not the beam in their own eye." Yet love will by no means set aside *righteousness*, that is, the critical eye for men's faults and shortcomings, but the "judge not" in the mouth of the Lord will before all say that there is something about which we *cannot* judge at all, wherefore all judging about the inmost part of a personality is so precarious; and then, that where we can judge, we are not, like the Pharisees, to place ourselves on a merely legal standpoint, and assert righteousness without love, that rather we are to seek out all, as well in the individuality of the other as in the circumstances, that may any way serve to modify a strict judgment. In a word, we are to view men in the light that beams from the love of Christ, and consider that we ourselves need a mild and merciful judgment.

#### § 114.

Even because we have experienced so great mercy from God the Lord, and because we live in the kingdom of reconciliation, we also are to be inclined and ready for the restoration of brotherly fellowship where this was destroyed, willing to agree with our adversary, to seek forgiveness where we ourselves have sinned against him, willing ourselves to forgive. The Lord has expressed the Christian duty of forgiveness in the answer to the question that Peter addressed to Him, "How often must I forgive my brother who sins against me? Till seven times?" (Matt. xviii. 21). The Pharisees taught that one should forgive his neighbour thrice; but if he then still repeated his sin against us, one should forgive no more. And Peter, then still entangled in Jewish externalism, thought he already raised himself to a higher standpoint by pledging himself that he would forgive till seven times. Then the Lord answered, "I say unto thee, not seven times, but seventy times seven." And by this He will lead him beyond numbers and reckoning, will say to him that our forgiving

must have no limit definable by numbers, will lead him back from all externalism to what is inward, the sentiment, will make him conscious that in the heart of the Christian there must flow an inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness, which must never dry up, as in God's father-heart there flows a perennial fountain of grace and of the forgiveness of sins. That narrow-hearted counting and reckoning which the Lord opposes, is still only too often found in men, in that they count how often they have forgiven, as they are also wont to count their good works, their works of mercy. The *motive* for the placable, forgiving disposition, the Lord has laid down for us in the parable of the servant deep in debt, to whom his lord of grace remitted the enormous debt of ten thousand talents: "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all this debt because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" (Matt. xviii. 33). And the guilt of our neighbour towards us is ever related to our own guilt towards God, as a hundred pence are related to ten thousand talents. Yet our forgiving should by no means exclude correction, or that we first try to convince the neighbour of the wrong that he has done us, as we also should be ready to be convinced. But the way and manner, the tone in which we correct the other, must flow from the placable frame of mind. And if, in general, all our dealings receive their worth, their right importance, only through the way they are carried out, this especially applies to our procedure when we show another his sin, in order thereupon to be reconciled to him. Here it is important to show *that* love that seeketh not her own, seeks not to humble the opponent, but only to win him. And when we then forgive, we are to forgive "from the heart," that it may not result in a seeming forgiveness and seeming reconciliation. We are to die to the hardness of our heart, which will not *forget* injuries that have been done to us. And even if we cannot forget in every sense of the word, yet the remembrance of the injury suffered will lose its sting when we conjoin it with another remembrance, namely, of the ten thousand pounds which have been remitted to ourselves, with the remembrance of the cross of Christ, and of this, that implacability is so thoroughly offensive to our God, for *this* reason, that reconciling

love belongs to His inmost being. Therefore, to the petition, "Forgive us our debts," in the prayer He taught His disciples, the Saviour added, "as we forgive our debtors." This, however, He did not do in the sense that *our* forgiving is to be the standard for that of God; for then—so imperfect in fact our forgiving ever is — we would never obtain the full certainty of the forgiveness of our sins; but in this sense, that we internally bind ourselves in prayer to offer a *sacrifice of thanks* because God forgives our many debts, in that we forgive our debtors. And He has introduced these words into the daily prayer, that we may be daily anew obligated to a placable disposition. The Church Father Chrysostom speaks in one of his sermons of people in the congregation who, when they prayed the Lord's Prayer, after the petition, "Forgive us our debts," omitted the following words, "as we forgive our debtors." For, they said, we cannot, however, utter this from the heart, and in prayer we do not say anything but what is full truth in us. While admitting the last point, namely, that a prayer in which our heart is not is unacceptable, he enforces upon them at the same time that we have by no means prayed the Lord's Prayer, and dare not hope to be heard if we mutilate His prayer, tear asunder what He has joined together, and that we must diligently and daily exercise ourselves to be able to speak these words also from the bottom of our heart.

And even in cases where on the other side there exists no susceptibility for forgiveness, no possibility of a mutual reconciliation, where men have shut their hearts against us, this sentiment should yet dominate in us, "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." But we let ourselves be overcome by evil when our love grows cold, when we give men up as unapproachable and irrecoverable, whom yet God the Lord has not given up, and who all, like ourselves, stand under God's forbearance. Therefore we are to love our *enemies*, even those who hate, insult, and persecute us (Matt. v. 44 f.), if we have such enemies at all. For we must not confound with personal enemies those who are our opponents, because, in this or that point of a different conviction from us, they oppose or contest our efforts, or because they would promote what is good in another way than we; nor yet those

whose individuality is so different from ours that we cannot be sympathetically disposed to them. In relation to actual and declared enemies, the chief rule is, that we for our part shall remain in love, that the enmity must not be mutual, and that we, as much as we can, make it known by deed that *we* are not their enemies, and that we in our own heart include them under the apostolic word, "*Love hopeth all things*" (1 Cor. xiii. 7). We are to hope in the possibilities of good which are present even in our enemies, hope that he who is now our enemy may yet get another disposition towards us. And if we should err in this, yet we are not deceived. For the chief thing is that our own soul remain in love, that we be not induced to fall away from it.<sup>1</sup> The sure token that we love our enemies is this, that we can *pray* for them from the heart.

But how does the case stand when the question is not so much of our personal enemies, as rather of the enemies of the truth, of Christ, of God's kingdom? First, it must be well considered whether they are in very deed enemies of Christ; for in this respect we are capable of going very far astray, and that in more ways than one. With actual enemies of Christ we can indeed have no sort of *communion* of spirit and heart. Still we are, even in respect to such people, to continue in love, as our Lord and Saviour Himself continues in love; and it is not His blame, but only their own, if His love becomes a judgment to them. And we are to include even them in that saying, "Love hopeth all things," namely, all that can and should be hoped according to God's word. Only one dare not indeed hope that enmity to Christ will gradually disappear in this world. We have in what precedes expressed it as our view, that the human race in the course of its historical development is to be regarded under the image of wheat and tares, that it will ever be divided into two camps, for and against Christ. But so long as time still lasts, and this æon of history, we must in regard to single individuals, concerning whose inmost heart we are not in a position to judge, hold fast to the proposition that he who to-day is an enemy, may to-morrow become a friend. A Saul can become

<sup>1</sup> Compare S. Kierkegaard in his book, *Works of Love*, the discourse on the words, "Love hopeth all things."

a Paul. There is no external token of the elect, and we must therefore, as a universal rule, maintain and adhere to this, to deny to no man the possibility of salvation. Therefore, even enemies of Christ may become an object of our intercession, as He Himself prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Nevertheless, one must acknowledge that there may be such an enmity, so bitter a hate against Christ, that it becomes *doubtful* whether in these cases intercession can take place. Here the utterance of the Apostle John is applicable (1 John v. 16), "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." This is a saying that is to be understood from the connection in which it occurs, and into which especially one must not put more than it actually contains. The apostle, that is, does not *forbid* to pray for a man, even when he has committed a sin unto death; but he also does not *command* such intercession as a Christian duty, does not say one *should* pray in such a case. By the sin unto death we are, that is, to understand falling away from Christ, the utmost degree of which is *that* sin which cannot be forgiven. The apostle will not lay it as a duty upon Christians to pray in cases of sin unto death, because being heard is then uncertain; and he had immediately before declared the unconditional certainty of being heard if we pray for a "brother" (that is, a believing Christian) who commits a sin "not unto death." While he on this uncertainty will make it no one's duty to intercede, he leaves it to our personal feeling whether we can pray in such cases, that is, can pray from the heart and with confidence.

### *Edifying Example.*

#### § 115.

If the best that a man can do for his fellow-man is this, to lead him to communion with Christ, to confirm him in this communion, to serve him as "a way to the Way"; and if direct influence through word and testimony is frequently subjected to many limitations, there is an *indirect* influence



in this connection, which is possible to every Christian, and which can be required of each—the influence through example and edifying walk. Teaching is ineffectual without life, that is, without example; but the latter is more effectual and powerful than many words. Example works like a quiet power, unconscious to itself and others, works like a power of nature; wherefore also the ancients said that in the neighbourhood of a godly man one becomes godly oneself, as in the neighbourhood of a brave warrior one becomes oneself courageous. But, in the same way, example works also in evil; in that from bad men a quiet, unconscious, and imperceptibly destructive power goes forth on their surroundings, like pestiferous vapours, which the bystanders cannot but inhale. Therefore the Lord requires of His disciples, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. v. 16). The Apostle Peter requires of teachers that they be examples to the flock (1 Pet. v. 3), and Paul exhorts the churches, “Be ye followers of me” (Phil. iii. 17). Peter speaks of wives who without the word have by their walk won their heathen husbands for the gospel (1 Pet. iii. 1). And the Church in her festal cycle has appointed a day in memory of the saints. Although the evangelical Church rejects all invocation of the saints, yet she teaches (Conf. August. 21), “that we should think of the saints to confirm faith, and that we take example of their good works, each according to his calling.” Now there is indeed only one perfect example, namely Christ; but it does not contradict this that there are also relative examples (those of the second order), whose validity as patterns of exemplary importance consists in this, that they are copies of Christ. But as without the greatest self-deception no single Christian can imagine that he is in his person a perfect copy of Christ, but can only strive to become so, so what is exemplary and edifying in the life of a Christian can ever only be in this, that his life expresses the Christian *effort* after the ideal. The same apostle who says, “Dear brethren, be ye followers of me,” says also, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 12). But

where this effort is present and shows itself, it works also as a hidden power to the edifying of others, as it likewise also works critically or judicially in its surroundings. In the same measure as in the walk of a Christian such genuine effort after the Christian ideal is expressed, his life, through its mere existence and self-unfolding, necessarily serves as an offence to many, for whose God-alienated and worldly life his mere existence is as a reproach (compare Eph. v. 11-13; Wisdom, ii. 12-16).

One may fitly raise the sceptical question whether we can properly speak of a special *duty* to give a good example, or whether one must not on the contrary say that there is no such duty at all, inasmuch as example occurs of itself as the natural consequence of the fulfilment of duty pervading the whole life, and therefore cannot be the object of a particular duty. Surely every Christian, apart from the example that he thereby gives to others, is bound to be that to which God has called him in his place and in his particular calling; and then it will follow of itself, that a good example is also given without any special effort for it. Nay, the good example works the more powerfully the less he that gives it is conscious of it, the more it resembles the fragrance that a noble plant exhales, without any further tendency, and only fulfilling the law of its being. And no doubt one must so far sustain this objection, that one certainly is not to do anything *merely* for the sake of example, that one would not in any case do. Nay, so to give example would lead to a reprobable, theatrical, and hypocritical representation, as with the Pharisees, who prayed and gave alms in order to exhibit to the people an example of holiness, or as now-a-days with such as go to church or to the Lord's table only for a good example. This must all be done because it is in itself good and according to duty. But to do it only for example, while one does not feel himself bound to do it, and yet by his example would bind others, is vain hypocrisy. Besides, it cannot be shown that Christ performed any action (for instance, an observance of the law) merely for example's sake. To this it cannot be objected that, on that last evening (John xiii.), He washed the disciples' feet, and afterwards said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I

have done to you." For it must not be overlooked that this transaction had the import of a symbolic action, which should represent to the disciples the ministering love that had appeared in Him, and His relation to them, to each one specially, should bring home to them a truth, a doctrine, and so far belonged to the prophetic office of Christ.

But while we thus support the position that nothing should be done for mere example, we can nevertheless speak of the duty to give a good example, if we, what since Fichte has found universal acceptance, make a difference between the *matter* and the *form* of the action. If we, that is, look to the matter of actions, or to *what* should be done, it can never be duty to do anything for example's sake; for we are only to do what in itself is duty. But, so far as our actions emerge into the community to which we belong, it becomes duty to undertake them in the consciousness that they can exercise an influence on our surroundings, as well in an edifying as in a destructive direction; as regards therefore the *form*, the *way* and *manner*, in which we carry them out, we must pay careful regard to the religious and moral state of the men among whom we live, that our actions, as far as possible, may serve for their edification, and not their destruction. And here the negative duty lies on us, to guard ourselves well against proceeding in so *regardless* a way, lest our actions, even when they in themselves aim at good, arouse misunderstanding and *offence*, become a stumblingblock to others, so that either the ideas of men become confused, or even their conviction of the true and good sustains a shock, and they thereby get occasion to sin. True, we can never prevent such from taking offence, as either *wish* to take it, or else *must* take it, because they, in a word, are hostile in spirit to the truth. But it is a requirement of love to give no offence to those to whom none should be given, namely, those unconfirmed or not sufficiently instructed and enlightened. If, accordingly, it was said above that the good example must be given unconsciously, and the more unconscious the more effectual it is, in that the agent disappears exclusively in the thing itself in ministering devotion and love to the kingdom of God, does good only for the sake of good, because good has become his second nature; this view is still to be combined with another, namely, with

the view that, so far as our actions emerge into the community, the agent must be conscious of an incessant regard for the moral state and spiritual stage of the surrounding community, that thus our actions in this respect must bear the stamp of the highest *prudence*. That unconsciousness and undesignedness of the example given will assert itself nevertheless, where the agent is a genuine character; for in the genuine character there is ever found a union of freedom and necessity, of will and nature. And that requirement that the example shall be given unconsciously, means, rightly understood, not, say, that a Christian be ever found in a state of childlike, naive lack of self-consciousness, but only that he must not be conscious of his personal perfection in such a way as to look back unduly on himself, and to view himself in the glass of his self-love.

Of Christ it is said, "He pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). Hereby it is said that it was natural to Christ uninterruptedly to look away from Himself, and as uninterruptedly to look to God's cause and the salvation of men; wherefore also He did not "spare Himself" (Matt. xvi. 22, Greek), nor avoided the enmity and scorn of the world. Applying that utterance to the present question, we say Christ could not be otherwise than conscious of His perfection, yea, He had to bear witness of His sinlessness and glory, had to leave behind the example of the perfect life. But this His consciousness was ever dominated by the feeling of being the servant of God the Lord on earth, dominated by the deepest feeling of dependence, by childlike humility before His heavenly Father, by the disposition of obedience and of self-denial. As a copy, the same is to be repeated in His followers. A Christian who gives a good example must indeed be conscious of a relative perfection; for what is absolutely imperfect can serve for no one's edification. But this consciousness must be dominated by self-denial and obedience in his calling, within which he has to contend enough against his sinfulness and imperfection, so that he must be penetrated by the deepest humility. But the more richly the individual is furnished by nature or by grace, the wider the compass in which a personality is adapted and called to serve as a pattern to the brethren, the stronger is the temptation to let false self-consciousness arise. Great

ecclesiastical personalities, reforming men, cannot enough lay to heart the saying, "Christ pleased not Himself," a word that finds manifold application. Founders of sects and parties in the Church have ever pleased themselves, and placed themselves in prominence.

*Love to the Dead.*

§ 116.

Human love embraces not only the living but also the dead, and among the latter not only those with whom we ourselves were personally connected, but also those whom our eye has never seen, but whom we notwithstanding love; but above all, it embraces those with whom we are connected in the communion of Christ. The Christian Church celebrates a day in memory of the saints who have already entered the heavenly community; and the Catholic Church likewise celebrates an All Souls' Day, on which children tarry by the graves of their parents, as well as the husband by the grave of his departed spouse, the bridegroom by that of his bride, the friend by that of his friend. In the Protestant Church also, in many places, a day is consecrated to the memory of the dead. If we are united in hearty love with our departed ones, love must follow them even beyond the grave. And although all earthly and sensuous intercourse with them is broken off, still we remain connected with them in the same kingdom; for Christ reigns over the living and the dead, and the Holy Spirit is He that forms the community, as well here as yonder, and in that Spirit we are continually united with them.

In our relation to the dead, much is left to religious presentiment, but which cannot fitly be raised out of this twilight to the clearness of definite conceptions, so that we are not in a position to derive ethical precepts therefrom. But it may well be declared as an ethical requirement, that we keep faith towards the dead with whom we were truly connected in love, let them not sink into the night of forgetfulness, but faithfully preserve their memory. We should, and can also in loving remembrance continue intercourse with



them, yea, also, many a time still receive from them counsel, exhortation, warning, strengthening for the good fight appointed to us. We should hold their memory in honour and protect it, as also be ready to defend it should it be unjustly assailed. If we were united in the same spirit with them, we should, according to the ability given us, continue their work in promoting God's kingdom, do our part, that what they have sowed and planted may grow and develop even after their departure, and all this in the hope of meeting again, and of reunion in the eternal mansions, where those who really belong to each other will also find one another. Scripture tells us that, under certain conditions, we shall then be received and entertained by the *friends* whom we have gained in the present world (Luke xvi. 9).

### § 117.

We mourn at the grave, and know nothing of that stoical coldness and insensibility on the departure of our nearest. Christ wept at the grave of Lazarus; He blamed not Mary Magdalene, who on Easter morning walked and wept in the garden; and the first Christians held a great lamentation over Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts viii. 2). But we "sorrow not even as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. iv. 13). And in closing up our love with the hope of eternal life, we are preparing ourselves for our departure. The older we grow, the more frequently do we experience that the earthly bonds by which we are bound with beloved men are being unbound by death. But in the same measure the roots are also unbound by which we ourselves have grown into the present world. By every such experience we are drawn ever nearer to that world into which we ourselves are to be "in a little while" transplanted. We feel ourselves ever more intimately connected with those who have preceded us, and who now, freed from all earthly hindrances and accidents, live in that land of glory and of immortality, to which we look upward in hope.

With the memory of our dead the question connects itself, "May the dead be prayed for?" The abuses which are connected in the Romish Church with the doctrine of the intermediate state between death and the day of judgment,

caused in the Lutheran Church the whole doctrine of the intermediate state to be thrust back and placed in the shade, and therewith also intercession for the dead, which certainly in the Romish soul-masses comes into the foreground in so unevangelical a way. If with the moment of death the fate of the soul in the future life is irrevocably decided, no doubt it is not only useless but unbecoming to pray in regard to that in which no change is possible. In the Protestant theology of the present time, the doctrine of the intermediate state has again asserted itself, although it must be allowed that a universal agreement by no means prevails regarding it. But if one believes in an intermediate state in the realm of the dead, in which there still remains a development for those who during this life have belonged to Christ, and if not for all, yet for many of those who have lived without Christ, a conversion is still possible, namely, for those who have had no opportunity here below to hear the gospel, or to whom it has not been announced and brought nigh in the right and effectual way,—whereby we are led to the descent of Christ into the realm of the dead,—then love will not be held back from commending the dead to the mercy of God, and making intercession for them. Moreover, this intercession is not expressly rejected and forbidden in the Lutheran Church, as also the above-mentioned assertion of a final decision taking place at the moment of death, on the salvation and damnation of the soul, is by no means expressly elevated to a doctrine of the Church in the confessional writings of the time of the Reformation. Rather it is said, in the “Apology of the (Augsburg) Confession,” while the sacrifice of the mass is rejected: “So we know that the ancients (namely in the post-apostolic church) speak of prayer for the dead, which *we do not forbid*” (*Scimus, veteres loqui de oratione pro mortuis, quam nos non prohibemus*),<sup>1</sup> however little such intercession was favoured and *supported* by the Reformation. Besides, it must be acknowledged that Holy Scripture is very reserved on this point, when express declarations are sought for. Yet we read in 2 Tim. i. 16–18 the following words of the apostle:—“The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but

<sup>1</sup> *Libri symbolici ecclesiæ evang.* Ed. C. A. Hase (Lips. 1827), p. 274.

when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently and found me. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.*" When the apostle expressly wishes and prays the Lord to show mercy to *the house* of Onesiphorus, it is to be assumed that Onesiphorus himself was then dead. For him even the apostle prays that the Lord would let him find mercy at *that* day, namely, at the last day, which ever hovered before the apostle's eyes. But if that is how the matter stands, then we have here an apostolic intercession for the dead. But especially we must draw attention to the petition, "Thy kingdom come," which the Lord Himself has taught us to pray in His prayer. For in this petition we pray not only that God's kingdom may come to us, but that it may come in all regions of the creation, so also in the domain of the dead, till the day of perfection. And if we in our daily petition, "Thy kingdom come," pray to God also for the souls of all the heathen who have passed away without knowing Christ, that the kingdom of God may come to them likewise, should we not also be able to include the petition for those with whom we were connected here below in the Lord? and should we not also be justified in including the petition for those for whose salvation we were anxious at their departure, while we likewise commit all things to the mercy and wisdom of God? Finally, reference may be made to 1 Tim. ii. 1, where the apostle exhorts that intercession be made for *all* men. It is not said, "For all men who are still in the flesh," that is, in this earthly life, but for all men; and accordingly is added, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

That the dead, or more correctly the living, the blessed, pray yonder for us, is an idea which quite naturally arises in the Christian consciousness, and is also by no means in contradiction to Holy Scripture. For if the rich man (Luke xvi. 27 f., 30) prays in hell for his brethren on earth, should not much more the blessed who live in the love of Christ remember us in their prayers?

## § 118.

If we love and honour the departed as immortal spirits, we must also honour them by taking under our care the earthly matter which was the dwelling of the spirit here below. The great importance which Christianity attaches to the body, makes it for Christians a sacred duty to show becoming respect to the corpse. In this body the dead has lived his earthly life; in it he has done his day's work, borne the burden of life and enjoyed its pleasures; and if he was a Christian, this his body has been a temple of God's Spirit. As the most worthy kind of burial, the Church has from the earliest times commended *interment* to the Christian consciousness and feeling. Although Holy Scripture furnishes no express command to inter, yet this emerges as a necessary consequence of Gen. iii. 19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Burial is also presupposed throughout, when Scripture speaks in its figurative language of death and resurrection (the seed, the corn of wheat, that falls into the ground and dies: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," John xii. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 44).

Interment preserves the mean between two other mutually opposed ways of dealing with human corpses. The one is embalming, which at times has also found entrance into Christendom, and which aims by human art to *preserve* the lifeless body, and, contrary to God's order, which has appointed it to dissolution, will conjure up a seeming life, whereby it is sought, as it were, to snatch his prey from death. The other treatment is cremation, which will not preserve the body, but hasten dissolution by an artificial practice, yea, cause this to be done in the utmost haste, in urgent speed, as soon as possible send the corpse out of the world, that phenomenon so uncomfortable to the natural man. Interment constitutes the right mean between these two extremes. We practise no arts either to preserve the body or to annihilate it, but deliver it to the dissolving power of nature, and let nature in all quiet and secrecy perform the work of annihilation.<sup>1</sup> We know that death is something else and more than a mere

<sup>1</sup> Compare Schleiermacher's *Rede bei Einweihung eines Kirchhofes*. Predigten, Bd. IV. 864.

natural process, that it is *the wages of sin* (Rom. vi. 23). We bow in humility under God's order, but have a sacred dread to enter upon voluntary experiments which should invade that law of dissolution that is confirmed by the Divine word, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," whereby certainly not a process of burning is indicated, but dissolution in the bosom of the earth. And on the grave we plant the cross, which reminds us of sin, and death as the wages of sin, but likewise of this, that the crucified Christ has taken its sting from death, and by His resurrection has changed death into an entrance into the heavenly kingdom.

When in our days voices are heard urging that burial be exchanged for cremation, we can only recognise in them utterances of a modern heathenism. For visibly the spokesmen of this agitation lack all religious presuppositions, regarding death as a mere process of nature, and relying exclusively upon "sanitary" grounds, about which there may be infinite disputations *pro* and *contra*. That the Christian Church—even granting that unchristianized states should accept the proposed procedure—will never engage in it, may be predicted with confidence. The Church cannot burn her dead, and let this custom take the place of the previous mode of burial; cannot break with her old venerable tradition, without likewise committing to the same fire also her *figurative speech* founded on the Scripture, which throughout speaks of death and resurrection, under presupposition of the burial of the dead. She would then have to acquire a new figurative language, and, for instance, appropriate the bird Phoenix from the heathen myth, which indeed for a time wandered into the Christian Church, an idea of the human spirit, how it raises itself from the ashes, and by its own power conquers death. That the Church shall sacrifice her old mode of speech, derived from the Lord Himself and His apostles, in which she expresses her ground-thoughts of earthly and heavenly things, and—a thing quite impossible—shall frame to herself a new view and language, is indeed to make a witless and absurd requirement of her.

The opening and dismembering of human bodies (dissection and anatomizing), in itself offensive not only to Christian but also to heathen feeling, can only appear admissible for the



sake of medical science, namely, as a means that may lead to the mitigation of human sufferings. But respect for the human body requires that these investigations be reduced to what is absolutely necessary. Also, the body of no man must be made a sacrifice to this practice, except his own consent may be presupposed. The survivors must be assured that in this they are undertaking nothing opposed to the mind and will of the dead. Only with those who have been executed as criminals, and so have partly lost their human rights, can an exception here be made. In all others it must be regarded as an invasion of their rights as men. To employ the bodies of poor people in such experiments, without consent previously obtained, is a rude regardlessness. Former times were, upon the whole, in regard to the execution of dissections, far more reserved than the present. The Greeks confined themselves to anatomizing the beasts. If hereby they were inferior to the moderns in thorough knowledge of the human organism, yet at any rate their respect for man's body, their dread to violate it, deserves to be remembered to-day, in opposition to the materialistic regardless way of thinking, which appears in so many in our time, to whom the difference between the bodies of men and those of beasts is entirely indifferent.<sup>1</sup>

*Love to Posterity.*

§ 119.

As we, spiritually as well as physically, not only hang together with the generations that have gone before, but also with those that follow, our love must also embrace posterity, and even, besides those who as children, as young people, grow

<sup>1</sup> Wuttke, *Christl. Sittenlehre*, II. 383. The antipathy that many Christians feel against experimenting with the bodies of the dead, was expressed in a peculiar way by Franz Baader. On his deathbed he forbade them to bring him under the dissecting-knife after he expired. "If they" (that is, the physicians) "knew nothing before," he said, "they shall also know nothing afterwards." But his deeper reason against dissection was his view that the approaching process of dissolution is of no smaller import than the formative process at the birth of the body (Baader's *Biographie und Briefwechsel, hrsg. von Hoffmann*, S. 130).

up under our eyes, those also who are not yet born. It is a truth which holds in great as in small things, of whole peoples as also of families and individuals, that the present generation in many respects is living on the capital (material and intellectual) which it has inherited, as also those now alive in many respects must pay a debt which a previous generation has contracted. Therefore it must lie on our hearts to leave to our children and successors a good and blessed inheritance. Above all, we should be eagerly desirous that we may leave God's word to them as the best inheritance, by at once letting the power of that word penetrate into all our works and undertakings, our manners and institutions, that hereby a good way may be made for those who come after us. The Apostle Peter gives us an example in this respect, saying in his Second Epistle to the Churches (i. 13-15), "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Here we have a great example of care for posterity. The apostle will that they to whom he writes ("who have received like precious faith with him") and their children have something to which to hold when he himself shall be no more with them. And the same has been the leading thought with the remaining apostles and evangelists, authors of writings which should be propagated from generation to generation in the Church. So should we also, each in the calling wherein he is called, aim at and study that we leave our children what can serve to strengthen and advance them. And although we can leave our children nothing else whatever than Christian exhortation and an honourable name, even that will prove a blessing to them.

But as we should strive to leave to our successors a fruitful inheritance, yea, as we, if possible, in self-denial and in the elevating feeling of our unity with the race, should not only in the literal but especially in the spiritual sense, plant trees whose fruits and shadows may benefit not ourselves but our successors; so should we also beware of incurring any guilt which we cannot ourselves atone for, but which would lie

heavy on the race that comes after us. But the gravest guilt is that which we contract by our sins, our pride, our levity, our swindling, our sensuality, our luxury and pleasure-seeking. And it often happens that the consequences of sins committed by the fathers, as well in a physical as a moral sense, come first in the children to their full and frightful development. Therefore both the community and the individual have to be on their guard that they do not fall into a debt by their sins, the payment and satisfaction for which they must leave to the following generation. To the many flagitious words that have been spoken upon earth, belongs that one also of the time of Louis xv., *Après nous le déluge*: "The flood may break in, if only we happily escape, and it cannot snatch us away!" But likewise there lies at the foundation of this word a terrible self-deception, pointing to a state of security of the worst kind.

*Love to the Impersonal Creature.*

§ 120.

Although we cannot indeed speak of love to the impersonal creature in the same sense as of love to personal being, yet no one will deny that we can speak of a love to nature, of a sympathetic intercourse with nature, and of a joy in it, without one needing, therefore, to honour the creature more than the Creator. The Christian contemplation and regard for nature forms the opposite of that ascetic-pessimist disregard and lowering of nature, wherein corporality is regarded as evil, and in every beauty of nature a demoniac temptation is seen. But it is equally opposed to the heathen-optimistic view, which will not see the disturbance that has undeniably pressed into nature, which assumes that "the vanity" (perishableness) to which nature is subjected, and which incessantly destroys nature's own structure and objects (as, for instance, when the worm secretly devours the blossom, the worm of sickness and of death gnaws at the root of human life, just when both should develop in their beauty), or that the horrifying war of all against all, as the animal world pre-

sents it to our eyes, the "struggle for existence," in which the stronger creature tortures and exterminates the weaker, or that organic beings, like those swarms of insects spreading mischief, that also all vermin belong to the perfection which we should admire in nature. Thus optimism seeks to comfort us with this, that the ground of our complaint disappears as soon as we place ourselves on the standpoint of the whole; for then we would find that the said imperfections and devastations help to educe even the perfection of the whole.<sup>1</sup> But no one has hitherto been able to make the connection clear, which must bind together all the presumed contributions to perfection, as little as this perfection itself has been actually proved. Moreover, in other relations, in other questions, a mode of presentation will hardly be allowed, according to which a work on the whole is to be called perfect, while it embraces an infinitude of most imperfect, bad details.

The Christian view of nature perceives amidst all the perishableness of nature, the traces of the eternal power and godhead of the Lord (Rom. i. 20). And in intercourse with nature, which, the more familiar one becomes with it, presents us with the more images and parables of the spiritual world, as well images of good as of evil, of conflict as of peace, the Christian mind lays itself open to the internally liberating, purifying, heart and life renewing impressions, which partly the loftiness and grandeur of creation, partly its harmonious beauty and loveliness, produces, and yields itself likewise to the quiet power of the romantic, whereby the same nature points beyond itself, and gives us a presentiment of a higher nature not yet revealed. That life in and with nature has its great importance for our æsthetic education, and by means of this for the ethical, this view retains its truth, although only within certain limits, for the Christian also, although he will never allow that nature can give us what only the Spirit of regeneration is able to give, who also first enables us to see nature in the right light.

<sup>1</sup> Die Flöhe und Wanzen, (The fleas and bugs,  
Wie sie alle beitragen—zum Ganzen. How they all help—the whole.)

## § 121.

When we speak of duties towards nature, these must be conceived according to their proper, deeper sense, as duties towards the Creative Will, which has appointed man as lord of nature, and has thereby bound him to treat nature in harmony with the creative thought, partly as a means for the moral problems of man, partly as a relative self-object. Therefore all arbitrariness in the way of treating nature, all useless spoiling, all wanton destruction, is evil and to be rejected. In one word we can say, man must treat nature with humanity, that is, in the way that agrees with the proper dignity of man, that is, with the dignity of human nature. Then he will also treat the single products of nature, each of the creatures according to its natural constitution and the destiny given to it by the Creator; and while he treats nature as means for *his* objects, remember likewise that all *life* is also an object in itself. As God's image on earth, man should not only mirror God's righteousness, which in the whole compass of creation maintains law and order, measure and limit, but also the goodness of God, who "is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Ps. cxlv. 9). For God has no pleasure in the death and destruction of that which lives, but heartily grants to every living being the short life, the short joy and refreshment, of which it is susceptible, and that in the midst of all the dying and passing away, amid all the mutual torture and destruction to which nature is subjected—a curse that cannot be removed till the kingdom of God shall be perfected, and the glorious liberty of the children of God shall be revealed (Rom. viii. 18 ff.). This finds a special application to our relation to the beasts, with whom we must have a natural sympathy, so far as they, although not with self-consciousness, yet with consciousness, can feel as well pleasure as pain. Man is indeed justified, yea bound, to kill beasts, partly in self-defence, partly that he may satisfy his needs. But then all unnecessary cruelty must be avoided. Regardless harshness and cruelty towards the beasts, which finds a pleasure in subjecting them to torture, is devilish. Cruelty to animals, overtaxing beasts of burden for greater gain, deserves the name of unrighteousness and



rude violence. In opposition to the cruelty to animals, which in our time is practised to no small extent, so that a society has been founded to counteract it, reference can be made to the Mosaic law, whose prescriptions on the treatment of beasts breathe a humanity and mildness which in this respect pervades the whole Old Testament. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast," we are told in the Proverbs of Solomon (xii. 10). He affords them not only the needful care, but grants them also the needful rest. Compare the utterance of the Lord in the prophet Jonah, iv. 11: "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, *and also much cattle?*" The humane, respectful treatment of nature must also be shown in regard to the lower beasts, which the naturalist has especially to lay to heart. It is told of Leibnitz that he once observed an insect long and carefully under the microscope, but then carefully carried it back again to its leaf. This procedure serves as an example of the most tender humanity, which corresponds as well to the dignity of man as of nature (namely, of the living creatures). Nature is hereby recognised at the same time as means for man's investigation and effort, and also as self-object. Leibnitz in his optimism was even conscious of having received a benefit from that insect, in so far as he had been instructed by it.

To employ beasts as means for our pleasures is allowed indeed, provided the pleasures are not cruel and inhuman, which is not always sufficiently considered. While hunting, for example, is unconditionally permissible, as long as it aims at the extermination of noxious beasts (like the Calydonian boar), or the satisfaction of human needs, it might on careful consideration seem doubtful whether the chase, which is merely arranged for the sake of hunting, admits of being justified as a humane pleasure worthy of man, which especially applies to so-called race-hunting or coursing.

Sir Walter Scott said of himself in his later years:<sup>1</sup> "Now too I go no more to hunt, though I was formerly a very good shot; but in some way I never was quite happy in this pleasure. I always felt uncomfortable when I had hit a poor

<sup>1</sup> Eberty, *Walter Scott*, II. 36.

bird, which then cast its dying eye upon me when I raised it, as if it would reproach me with its death. I will not represent myself as more merciful than other people; but no habitude could root out of me this feeling of cruelty inflicted. Now that I can follow my inclination without fear of making myself ridiculous, I declare openly that it gives me much greater pleasure to see the birds happily flying about in the free air above me." True, he adds to this: "Yet this feeling is by no means so strong in me as that I should, for instance, prevent my son from being a keen sportsman." Without doubt, Scott, who attached very great importance to social usage, entertained the fear that his son might become the object of aristocratic criticism, if he persuaded him to desist from the noble passion.

So there may well be some ground to doubt whether it is admissible to enclose birds (especially those indigenous with us) in a cage, and to force them to a mode of life that is quite contrary to their nature, and whether Schopenhauer, who hated men but loved the beasts, is not perhaps right, when he maintains that many Buddhists in this stand higher than many Christians, inasmuch as the former on feast-days, or when they have experienced some joy, go to the market, buy up birds, but then open their cages at the city gate, and let them fly away into the free air.

A question which we dare not here pass over is this, Are, for instance, vivisections to be approved, in which a living creature (for example, a dog or a rabbit) is done to death amid the most dreadful torments, that amid these tortures natural-historical observations may be made for enriching science? *Granted that really* a vivisection is absolutely necessary to gain insight that may become salutary for the life and health of man, we do not venture to declare it inadmissible. But then there is also a so-called science which, merely for the satisfaction of an interest that is not specially distinguishable from ordinary curiosity, employs such animal tortures, which are to be viewed as quite abominable. True, indeed, one hears it said: It can never be known whether one may not perhaps discover something in a vivisection that possibly might be useful for human life or health. But we cannot persuade ourselves that an experiment in which an innocent

creature becomes the prey to the most dreadful sufferings, is sufficiently justified by pointing to an indefinite and accidental possibility. To justify an action which must at least cost every one great self-conquest, where sympathy with living creatures is not fully suppressed, and for which at any rate only a higher regard to humanity can supply a motive—for this, a well-grounded prospect is requisite that a really existing need will thereby be met. A vivisection must only be carried out in cases where, after the ripest consideration, it has become indeed a *matter of conscience*, and on this presupposition it will but seldom occur. How many vivisections have been quite unconscientiously undertaken, only that a vain and empty pleasure in experimenting may be satisfied! How frequently is nature stretched upon the rack, that one might make himself important with a bit of “exact science”! We know also indeed the remark that even mere knowledge is in itself a good to man, and has a value in itself, even if it find no immediate practical application. But not to speak of this, that much of what man loves to call science is of the most trifling import, yet all knowledge in the end must be at the service of the object of humanity, in which service knowledge in any case only forms a single element, that must now be onesidedly cultivated at the cost of other essential elements. The investigator of nature is first and before all a man, and only afterwards an investigator of nature. And sympathy, feeling with the living creature, the feeling of our relationship with them, resting on the unity of the life of nature, forms one of the fundamental constituents of genuine humanity. The naturalist must not, in order to gain a knowledge of very subordinate, doubtful, and vanishing value, make himself the gaoler of a fellow-creature, and along with that unhappy creature sacrifice his own deliberately suppressed humanity on the altar of natural science, not even when one might thereby gain a famous name, yea, the happiness to be held up in some journal of natural science as one of the men who have made a contribution to the infinite array of the facts of natural science. Truly great naturalists, like Blumenbach, have also expressed themselves to this effect, and insisted that one should only proceed to vivisections extremely seldom, namely, only in most weighty investigations, promising an immediate

benefit.<sup>1</sup> Legislation must put limits to cruelty to animals, and thereby also to the misconduct that is committed by vivisections.

#### CHRISTIAN SELF-LOVE.

##### *Self-Love in Truth and Righteousness.*

#### § 122.

Devotion to the kingdom of God outside of us, to the community, to our neighbour, to the whole creation, must not be unlimited, but must have its limits, its measure, conditioned by our devotion to the kingdom of God in ourselves, to my own God-ordained ideal, by care for my personal relation to God, my salvation, and my perfection; and so by my effort to become what God has destined me to be. As the devotion of love may not be without healthy self-forgetfulness, so it must likewise be accompanied by a healthy self-assertion, a right interest in one's own self. He who will work and labour only for the kingdom of God outside him, but neglects to labour for the individual formation of the kingdom of God in his own personality, will not be even fit in truth to be and to effect something for others; for only the powerful, independent individuality understands how to love and to devote himself. But especially must it be remembered that ministering love is by no means a mere service of man, but above all God's service, and that this essentially embraces all that belongs to the kingdom of God *in us*, whereby that kingdom should be planted and developed within our own personality. And thus there results the conception of *Christian self-love*. It is devotion to the ethical ideal, hovering before the individuality, to the ideal of ministering love, in its unity with the ideal of freedom and blessedness, and that in this definite, individual form. This self-love attains its full outer form not otherwise than by long and severe labour, an earnest struggle against our natural sinful individuality, which herein places so great and ever new hindrances in the way.

When we said above that love to men must be inseparably

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, II. 400.

connected with *love as well to truth as to righteousness*, this applies also to self-love. In the effort to work out the ideal of our own personality, we must be *true* to ourselves, that we may know what we should properly be according to God's will and appointment (our peculiarity, our talent, our calling), and what hinders us from actually being it—a knowledge which we gain in the hours of contemplation and of prayer, as also amid the experiences of practical life. We must tell ourselves the truth, and hear the truth from the mouth of others, be able to bear it, keep heart and ears open for the voices and testimonies of the truth, must "try the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John iv. 1), and prosecute our enlightenment, our growth in knowledge. We must, further, be also *just* to ourselves, and that not only in so far as we assert, preserve, and defend that right of the personality which God has bestowed on us, as well in the kingdom of nature as in that of grace; but also by judging ourselves in righteousness after the word of God, mindful of that word of the apostle (1 Cor. xi. 31), "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;" must fight against all unrighteousness that cleaves to our existence, our abnormalities, so that we, comforting ourselves with the righteousness of faith, may likewise be in earnest with the righteousness of life. To this righteousness of life it belongs that our natural disposition be more and more brought under the dominion of grace, that our faults of temperament be gradually done away by the power of the educating grace of God. Although these faults never fully disappear in the present life, yet the history of God's kingdom shows us, in many comforting examples, what His grace can bring to pass under the labour of man's free will. The sanguine temperament in the Apostle Peter, which made him so fickle and unreliable, that he even denied his Lord and Master, was transformed by grace, so that later it became the ministering and supporting foundation for that fiery enthusiasm of faith, that ever fresh young labour in the ministry of God's kingdom. He with the lightly moved temperament, formerly a pliant reed, became the rock on which the Lord has built His Church. For now his fiery being, his life in the present moment, without thought and fear of what is coming—it is no more the unsteady, easily shaken thing it was. The choleric



temperament in Paul, which made him at one time a fanatic, became, through the power of grace, the ministering and supporting foundation for the world-vanquishing heroism of faith and hope, which drove him over land and sea to the ends of the then known world, in order to plant the gospel among the heathen peoples, in the midst of dangers and troubles. His firm, inflexible, energetic will, is now no longer the egoistic will of former times. He is transformed and bound in the love of Christ, which seeks not her own, and makes him fit to become all things to all men. And innumerable other examples can be added to these from the earliest times to the present. To the righteousness of life which we are to work out in ourselves, this also belongs, that all the elements of the personal life get justice and attain the right relation to each other, the right equipoise, that all in our life be in the right place and in the right measure. Here, then, it is of importance that we prosecute a rightly understood "moderate morality," that extremes be avoided, and we be found in the right mean, not an external, but the true inner mean. But the inmost mean in all, the true centre of life, is the divine thought of wisdom.

*Compassion with Ourselves.*

§ 123.

But in this work of realizing our ideal of personality, presupposing it to be actually carried out in truth and righteousness, it cannot but be that we—and that the more, the more in earnest we are about it—make many sad experiences in ourselves in regard to that "bottomless depth of corruption" which lies hidden in our old man, to all the unrighteousness and finer untruth which is revealed to us, the more we increase in right self-knowledge, our many defeats and our small progress, the constant recurrence of our former faults, with the laying off of which, as it seems we are making no progress whatever, our uselessness and incapacity. Many a time we cannot avoid feeling a deep *compassion with ourselves*, that is, not only repentance, which is inseparable from self-accusation, yea, is frequently combined with anger, with indignation at

ourselves, but also genuine compassion with the misery, the wretchedness of the state in which we are, the wide distance between what we are and what we would like to be. If only this compassion with ourselves does not degenerate into morbid reflection and self-contemplation, or into weak and fruitless complainings, or even into that self-satisfaction and vanity of spurious pietism, it is an essential element of right self-love, and a *weighty basis of sanctification*. We designate it, therefore, as the sacred compassion with ourselves, which we must not let sink in false self-complacency, in Laodicean lukewarmness ("I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," Rev. iii. 17); but which we must just as little confound with that perverted, merely *worldly* compassion with ourselves, to which we are only too much inclined, because we are far too anxious for our earthly wishes and dreams of happiness. That men feel compassion with themselves is a very usual thing; but as a rule, it is of this world. One laments about himself, mourns, complains, sobs and weeps over his thousandfold sorrows, for ruined happiness, for poverty, want, and death, for deceived hopes, misconception, and injury, unfortunate love, that inexhaustible theme for the lyric poet's feeling of compassion with himself, for so many temporal losses. But the tears of sensitive compassion which men weep over themselves, or over others, have often only a doubtful value, because sin and the misery of sin, in which one is involved, is entirely left out of account. "Weep not for me, but *weep for yourselves and for your children*," said Christ, on His way to Golgotha, to the daughters of Jerusalem (Luke xxiii. 28). With these words He will awaken sacred compassion with ourselves. This we should not only feel in our pre-Christian state, while the goodness of God is leading us to repentance (conversion; Rom. ii. 4), but even so also in our Christian state. No Christian, so long as he wanders here on earth, has done with his regret and repentance, with the pain, "the godly sorrow" (2 Cor. vii. 10), that it is ever still so amiss with us, that so much in us is still hindered and bound, so much that must still sob and complain, that longs for redemption and awaits it (Rom. viii. 23). There is no single Christian on earth who in this respect has gone out of mourning. "O wretched man that I am," exclaims the great apostle, "who

shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24). He thus speaks, groaning and mourning in his inmost being over himself; but he also raises himself above this, in that he at once adds, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," and thus gives us a pattern of what in this is the normal state.

And this exclamation of the apostle, "O wretched man that I am," is a tone which—modified indeed according to individual differences—must resound through the life of every Christian. In the life also of those who hitherto are only engaged in the search of Christianity, we hear it, although not with full distinctness. In all deeper natures, who earnestly seek the solution of the riddle of their personal life, we meet with this compassion with themselves which can only find its right expression in the above words of the apostle, when these are also uttered in the apostle's *sense*. "I feel a deep sorrow and compassion with myself," says Mynster, in the introduction to his *Contemplations*, when he is still in the vestibule of Christianity, and is depicting the moods and movements of mind leading to it, "as often as I think of all that I suffered, even when the world deemed me happy. Many a time my eye fills with tears when I consider my child in its cradle: Shalt thou also suffer what I have suffered? Shall a sword likewise pierce through thy soul also?" And Petrarch says: "When I expatiate in my quiet thoughts, I am possessed by so keen a compassion with myself, that I must often weep aloud." Human individualities are indeed very different from each other, and the same thing cannot possibly occur in all. But one may well maintain, that he who has felt nothing akin to this within himself, who has remained an entire stranger to such a state, is not adapted for Christianity. But when any one has become sincerely a Christian, his complaint has also learnt to understand itself in those words of the apostle, and apprehended them also in the apostle's spirit. And if we then say with him, "O wretched man that I am," we must likewise be able to say with him, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord,"—thank Him for this, that He has also *shown* me mercy, has *heartily interested* Himself in me, and has internally given the pledge and seal thereon: He will do so also in future. We repeat, that

that sacred compassion with ourselves must not degenerate into vain sentimentality, into a soft life of feeling. Rather it should awaken us to be ever inwardly renewed in *thankfulness* and in *faith* in the mercy of God, to be renewed in longing after perfection, and in *earnest work* on the problem of life, which our God has set us; that we, encouraged, work on in hope and in *patience with ourselves*, which, however, is by no means the same thing as if one might lay his hands in his bosom and yield to an abominable *laissez aller*. But as "Rome was not built in a day," it needs time and patience that beings, so imperfect and sinful as we, may be built up anew, yea, transformed, to become holy in spirit, soul, and body, which in this earthly existence ever remains but a fragmentary work. God the Lord must herein show unutterable patience with us; and we should have patience with ourselves.

And then, compassion with ourselves should also lead us to feel compassion and pity for others, and thereby become fitted also to co-operate, that human need far and near may be supplied. Here an alternate action occurs. Only when we feel a thorough compassion for ourselves, have recognised in ourselves in what the misery properly consists, the dark secret of life (or, as people say, "where the shoe pinches us"), only then can we feel a thorough compassion with others. But, on the other hand, it must be said: only when we have a thorough compassion with the need of others, with the misery of humanity, when we in entire self-forgetfulness can give ourselves to the need of strangers, can take up into our heart all the misery, all the woe of humanity, can our compassion with ourselves also in the same manner be purified from false egoism and small narrow-mindedness, and gain a truly higher and spiritual character. While we feel ourselves as individuals, we are likewise to feel ourselves *members* of the body of the entire human community, we are also to be capable of suffering for others, for the whole, and keep alive in us the feeling that the individual has to seek and finds his comfort even in that which has been given for comfort to all the world.

## § 124.

Schopenhauer, who in his doctrine of unhappiness directs his view with special interest to compassion, and is of the opinion that all love is at bottom nothing but compassion (namely, with the universal unhappiness), attaches a special importance to compassion with ourselves, and even maintains that all weeping, the whole stream of human tears, has its proper source nowhere else than in compassion with ourselves. We will take occasion from this paradoxical contention to go more fully into our view of the *limited* importance belonging to the conception of compassion with ourselves.

According to Schopenhauer, we weep because we make our sufferings, our difficulties, the object of our reflection, grasp them in the imagination, and then feel ourselves such unhappy and pitiable creatures, that we are seized with compassion, with oppressive pity for ourselves, which finds by tears an alleviation, an outlet. Little children may confirm this, in that, when they suffer any pain, they for the most part only begin to weep much when they are commiserated, so that they do not so much weep for the pain itself as for the imagination of it. If this imagination is more keenly excited in them, they feel themselves indescribably unhappy, and become the object of their own sincere compassion. Schopenhauer further thinks that when tears are drawn from us, not by our own, but by others' sufferings, this only happens by our setting ourselves, through means of the fancy, vividly in the place of the sufferers, or as, for example, in cases of death, seeing in that one fate the fate of all humanity, consequently also, and above all, our *own* fate (?), and so at bottom, although by a longer roundabout way, weeping from compassion with ourselves. Now, while we quite acknowledge that an element of truth is contained in this theory, yet we cannot, in the first place, convince ourselves that all human tears find their adequate explanation in *compassion*, whether with ourselves or with others. True, indeed, compassion is to be viewed as a chief source of human tears. But if one be not prepossessed and entangled by a metaphysical principle, which must be carried through at all events, and in spite of the reality, life and experience will show us that there are



also tears of joy, tears of admiration and emotion, of adoration and thankfulness, which are pure tears of *humility*, so far as we in our weakness and poverty conceive the good and joyful, the great, glorious, and delightful, that we experience, as a *grace*; and our finite ego in contact with grace melts, as it were, and dissolves in tears for this undeserved glorious thing that befalls us. In that grace makes us conscious of our own triviality and unworthiness, it gives us likewise an internal elevation, which is not the case with compassion. But in the next place, we cannot at all see that all compassion with the need of others is at bottom and especially compassion with our own, so that we ever, although by a roundabout way, should only weep for ourselves or in our own cause.<sup>1</sup> This view hangs together, indeed, with Schopenhauer's at once pantheistic and egoistic presuppositions, but does not harmonize with reality. We allow, indeed, that in order to have a compassion with the sufferings of others, we ourselves must have in our nature, in our own individuality, a susceptibility for these sufferings and pains, as otherwise we would lack the key to them, the condition for understanding them, as it is even said of our Saviour, that He "can have compassion with our weakness, because He was in all points tempted like as we are (*καθ' ὁμοιότητα*), yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). But one is not yet hereby justified in saying that we in the fate of others mainly see our own, and that all compassion with others is only an indirect compassion with ourselves, whereby all its importance and originality is withdrawn from compassion with others. We say, on the contrary: We are not mere individuals, only living to ourselves and to our own self-interest; we are as individuals also members of human society, and can therefore feel with that whole and universality, can also shed tears in its cause and for its sake. There is, indeed, a compassion with others to which Schopenhauer's contention may apply, that it is essentially only a compassion with ourselves, so far as we, on seeing the sufferings of others, think above all of ourselves, of our own either actual or at least possible and threatening fate. But then there is also a compassion with

<sup>1</sup> "Weeping is—compassion with oneself, or compassion thrown back upon its point of departure" (Schopenhauer, *die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, I. 445).

others, in which individual regard for ourselves entirely withdraws into the background. Let it be even allowed that compassion with ourselves stands by the side of our compassion with others, harmonizes with it, yet it is quite a different thing to make the egoistic compassion with ourselves the chief thing. True, Schopenhauer speaks repeatedly of an unselfish love, in which we make no difference between ourselves and others, so far, namely, as we pantheistically melt with them into the All-One; but at any rate we must designate his explanation of human weeping as most one-sided and misleading. There are indeed tears of righteousness, of indignation, of bitterness, for the injustice suffered by others, where, nevertheless, regard for ourselves, the sense of the injustice done to ourselves, remains predominant. But there are also tears of indignation and bitterness where the thought of ourselves is pressed into the background, and is by no means that which essentially determines—tears as original and immediate as those which our eye sheds for a wrong committed on ourselves. Then it is not ourselves, so to speak, that weep, but the totality that weeps in us for all that injustice, all that oppression of the human, all that lying and craftiness which hinders the true and good on earth. There are tears of love, which at bottom only self-love, yea, the lower love of self, has elicited; but there are also tears of love, of which in the strictest sense it can be said, Love seeketh not her own. Who will maintain that Christ wept for Himself when He wept for the people who would not recognise the things that belonged to their peace (Luke xix. 41 ff.), that people that had been appointed and chosen to so great a glory, but should soon, with all their great memories, fall into the hand of their enemies? He wept as He who bore the world's sin, as the Saviour of the world, as the *Head* of humanity. Or who will maintain that He wept for Himself when He wept in that hour of mourning at Bethany, and at the grave of Lazarus, where He, through and beyond the mourning of the single family, saw all the woe which had come into this world by death, where the whole power of death and of corruption stood before His eyes? Here genuine sympathy is presented to us, that is, compassion with the need of men, of the whole world, and that in its entire originality, its most proper value, its

glory. But then, as in Christ all elements of the personality and of the personal life meet with justice, there appears in Him the autopathetic also, that is, His individual compassion with Himself. This is expressed especially in that passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, v. 7, where, in unmistakable reference to Gethsemane, to the hour in which His soul strove in keen anguish and was sorrowful unto death, it is said, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and *tears*, unto Him that was able to save Him from death." But just in Gethsemane we see that both this vivid compassion with Himself in His suffering, and His compassionate Saviour's-love to the *race*, whose sin and guilt He bears upon His heart, are most wonderfully, yea, inscrutably intertwined. And when we direct our view to the disciples and followers of Christ, we find that in the measure that their life is more fully penetrated by the redeeming and sanctifying influences of Christ, those two elements, the sympathetic and the autopathetic, compassion with others and compassion with himself, ever also harmoniously interpenetrate, whereby, however, it is not excluded that in the course of life, and amid its various situations, these contraries many a time emerge in their relatively independent importance and validity. So with the Apostle Paul. The same man who, in purely individual compassion with himself and his soul's need, says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" testifies in another mood, yet in the course of the same epistle (ix. 2, 3), "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (if, that is, the children of Israel were thereby to be brought to salvation in Christ). He here fully felt himself a member of the people Israel, so that individual interest for his own person entirely withdraws. And so we should all, in the communion of Christ, grow up to this, as well to feel compassion with ourselves, to weep for ourselves, to say with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" as also to add our thanks for God's mercy to us. But also we should be educated for this, that, with repression of individual self-interest, we can weep over Jerusalem, for the misery of men, of the people, of the wide

world; but thereupon also let this grief and sorrow pass into a hearty, "I thank God through Jesus Christ,"—for this, namely, that His kingdom is still coming. And this twofold mood of the mind holds good not only in the highest, the religious sphere, but the one as well as the other asserts itself also in the lower, the so-called merely human relations. There are purely individual tears, of which we can say with the poet—

" And have I also wept alone,  
The pain of it is all my *own*."

But there are also genuine and justifiable tears for pains which are not our own.

Whether Christ ever wept tears of joy we know not, as nothing has been told us of this. But He appeared as the personal grace, in order to draw forth tears of joy and thankfulness, of admiration and adoration, from publicans and sinners, from the spiritually poor, the humble in heart. But here also it may be said: there are not merely tears of joy for what we have personally experienced. There are also tears of joy which, without special regard to ourselves and what is ours, are wept for the sake of others, of the people, yea, of the whole world.

After the present discussion, then, we absolutely cannot agree with the paradox of Schopenhauer. If we were to agree to a partial concession, perhaps it might be allowed that the most of "the many sublunary tears" are not witnesses of humble joy and thankfulness, nor of sympathetic joy, not witnesses of admiration and inner elevation, but of *compassion*; and that again the latter, for the most part, do not spring from sympathy with others, but from sympathy with ourselves; that, in fine, by far the most of these are begotten by a breakdown of earthly happiness, a wound inflicted on our flesh and blood. Yet one would err were one to admit this position without limitation, and were without more ado to apply so far from pleasing a view to the whole human race. There are, that is, in the compass of the history of humanity, very different times. There are times, the organic periods in history, in which the sympathetic, devotion and self-sacrifice, life in the whole and for the whole, for great universal objects, and for the religious, the sacred problems of humanity, is much more powerful, more generally diffused and prevalent, than in other

times in which egoism shows itself predominant; fellowship is dissolved by a bad individualism, the individual knows only his own personal joy, only his own pain. By this various character of the times, the contemplative view is necessarily modified. We will not, indeed, attempt to count human tears, to give the statistics of them. There is Another and a Higher here who counts them. But our comfort against every disheartening view of the race is this, that the love of Christ, with unutterable forbearance, continues to develop far and near its redeeming efficacy; that His kingdom truly comes, although, as at least it appears to our limited view, so very slowly; that it yet comes in many places where we see nothing of it; and that we will yet one day see, to our surprise, that *this kingdom is far greater, and embraces far more, than we are commonly disposed to admit.*

*The Earthly and the Heavenly Calling.*

§ 125.

The life-problem that God has given us embraces at the same time devotion to the community, and devotion to the ideal of our individuality determined by God Himself, a problem that is set to each one by his *calling*, understanding by this not merely the earthly, but especially also the heavenly calling, the religious destination of each one, which is the universal human, which on this earth should be carried out in all forms of human life, and thereby approve itself as the *religious-ethical*. In his calling the individual is to serve the community; and the most essential service which the individual is in a position to render to society, is not to squander his powers for all manner of secondary things, but to accomplish something effectual in his calling. But in his calling the individual is also to find the deepest self-satisfaction, and to work out his personality.

The earthly calling, whether this be found in the family circle, or in the state and in the civil community, or in the Church, or whether it be found in the service of art or science, is the finite, the temporal form within which the heavenly and



therewith the universal-human calling on earth, is to be realized, is to gain hold and limitation. Every calling is justified, when as a *service* it co-operates for the problem of the totality, and the universal-human (the one thing that is needful for all) can be realized by means of it. The earthly calling rests partly on the individuality and the talent, partly on the special divine leading, that makes itself known through certain external circumstances and relations. It is it that establishes inequality among men, that places an illimitable multiplicity of differences between men, while the heavenly calling, which is to be fulfilled within the sphere of those earthly callings, in spite of individual differences, makes men alike, remains the same for all and each. While we, as regards the heavenly calling, cannot be in doubt what God's will for us is, this is by no means the case with the earthly calling. For each one the most earnest problem must be this: in the choice of the earthly calling to attain to clear consciousness as to what is God's good and acceptable will with him. It is a sad phenomenon, often recurring in human life, that men do not find their right and proper calling, that not a few fail in their earthly calling because through circumstances, family relations, favourable prospects, they let themselves be drawn into a career to which they are not called at all, or because they have conceived an unhappy love for a calling for which, however, the requisite gifts are denied them. How many have imagined that they heard the voice of the Spirit calling them to be poets or artists, have pursued an ideal that was not appointed for them, and thereby have missed the goal for which they were destined! They resemble the man who in the morning enters on his journey on the highway, but lets himself be drawn aside from it to catch some bird that allures him upon sideways and footpaths, hunts over meadows and brooks, through wood and thicket, round extensive lakes, till he at last remarks that the hours are fled, and that it is now mid-day, or perhaps he even becomes aware that it is afternoon, and already the sun is sinking lower and lower to the horizon, and—the bird is not caught. There are others who easily find their earthly calling, because early in life's morning the fairest bird alights upon their shoulder, and does not leave them again, but who do not become aware of the heavenly

calling, or do not find it, because this earth with its glories is enough for them; and others who do not find the heavenly calling because the world with its troubles, amid the fatiguing toil of duty, suffices them, and leaves no time for anything more. Hence so many unfinished and incomplete, so many half and quarter human existences.

### § 126.

To tear asunder the heavenly calling from the earthly, or conversely, alike deserves the name of unrighteousness. Asceticism (life in pious exercises), so far as it asserts itself as an independent mode of life, places the destination of the earthly existence not in the junction of the heavenly with the earthly, but in dying to the earthly, which is merely destined to be sacrificed, that is, burned. Renunciation, resignation, is regarded as the destination of the earthly existence. So in the life of hermits and monks, especially of the East, which is from ancient times the home of asceticism. For with the monks of the West, especially the Benedictines, the ascetic ideal does not appear in its absolute purity, as they likewise wrought for objects of culture, as for the reclaiming of waste lands, for agriculture and gardening, for the preservation of classical literature, and for the instruction of youth in their own schools. This is a principle altogether separating from asceticism; it is the principle of humanity, that here breaks through, although held under strictly ascetic discipline. But the more consistently the ascetic ideal is pursued, it will everywhere become the more evident that an existence untrue in itself proceeds therefrom. The ascetic will, that is, seize the infinite, outside and independent of the finite; and by casting finitude behind him, he robs himself of the condition for getting the other as his own. He lacks, as it were, the vessel to receive and bear it, and is overwhelmed, as it were, by the infinite. As the ascetic will live exclusively and immediately for the heavenly calling, which is the universal-human, his life can acquire no truly individual character, but is lost in the effort to become a disciple of Christ, a follower of Christ, a child of God, but in *pure* (abstract) *generality*. For the earthly calling is wanting as the temporal form by means

of which the children of eternity are to be brought up and developed. And hence it arises that the ascetic so often ends by sinking into the pantheistic ocean of mysticism. The suppression of the individuality, the lack of true and free individuality, characterizes throughout the whole monkish life. The rule of the order clothes all monks in the same *uniform*. And although the many orders of monks present a great difference in their organization, the most manifold modifications, yet herein we can rather speak of the *particular* than of individual differences.

In the domain of Protestantism, the life one-sidedly dedicated to the heavenly calling cannot properly emerge in the forms named, especially not in the externality of monasticism. Yet it shows something corresponding to this in pietism and methodism. Pietism in the Protestant Church is the exclusive piety which will acknowledge nothing but what is immediately religious. The truth in pietism is this, that man's life should be lived for the heavenly calling, that for each man *one* thing is needful. But while it thus has an open eye for the universal human destination, namely the religious, it lacks the eye for the ethical, which is inseparable from that, for the multiplicity and free movement of man's life. It forgets that in the heavenly calling we are to live not only for the future life beyond, but also for the present, and that the heavenly calling embraces the ethical side of the whole life of man. It fastens its gaze on the One in such wise that the many and manifold entirely vanishes from it. This disregard of the manifold has indeed its importance in the beginning of the Christian life, but is not destined always to remain. In this, pietism constitutes an opposition to mysticism. For while mysticism likewise lets the gaze rest upon the One, but with this will anticipate the *final goal* of the Christian life, namely, the everlasting rest in the perfection of eternal life, pietism stops at the *beginning*, at the revolution of the soul, its movement away from the world to Christ; and that must indeed, in the nature of the case, be a world-renouncing movement. This movement, this first rush to the kingdom of God, pietism incessantly and again and again brings about, as is especially observed in the so-called revival preachers, who, preaching repentance and conversion Sunday by Sunday, make their hearers

repeat this first movement from the world to Christ without rightly leading them deeper into the Christian life itself. As pietism thus stops at the first beginning, its ethics, despite all talk of the life and the fruits of faith, can only turn out extremely defective. The problems of the earthly life are limited to the most indispensably necessary. For pietism there exists no free realm of humanity, full of life. To the great spheres of humanity, to state, art, and science, its attitude is that of refusal and condemnation, or of absolute indifference. And the world-historical development of the race it regards only from the point of view of the judgment and of damnation, and awaits impatiently the last day. Even for the Church, in its historical appearance among the nations, it feels no interest. It feels an interest only in individuals, in "the little flock," and has ever a tendency to separatism, to withdrawal into conventicles. From this its character of fleeing from and enmity to the world arises the unspeakable monotony of its piety. Religion can only show itself the true vital unity of human life, when it comes forth in the midst of a free and great manifoldness of the world's life.

But in strong contrast to the exclusive life for the heavenly calling, the world of to-day shows us just as exclusive a life for the earthly calling, and that in a far preponderant majority of the race. We speak not of such as live on without any definite calling, without a life-problem imposed by duty, whose life is thus altogether a prey to accident. We speak of those who live for their calling. But how many there are—which we already found occasion to show in what precedes, namely, where we treated of civil righteousness—who live a life of unrighteousness, so far as they live indeed with great energy and conscientiousness for their special life-task, be that a task of civil and business life, or a task belonging to the world of ideas, with which they feel themselves connected by their special talent, while they absolutely remain unconscious of their universal human life-problem, and their life is thus spent in that which differences and separates them from other men, but does not move in that which is common to them with all, with the cultured and uncultured, the wisest and the simplest, who never ask themselves the one question, what it means to be a *man*. Again, there are others who see indeed

that the special calling must be taken up into the universal human, and subordinated to it; but the moral alone is viewed by them as the universal human; or in so far as the religious is included, it takes place only in indefinite and formless generality. With this, then, the abstract, purely formal idea of humanity is insisted on, which emerges under the title of a philosophic righteousness. The good, quite in general, likewise duty and conscience, is recognised as the highest, embracing all. But then this consciousness of duty, this conscience, is—as we see, for example, in Kant—nothing more than an “altar to the unknown God,” whom Christianity has first revealed to the world. But the truly universal human is the Christian-religious, in which the ethical is included, is “the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 14), which is destined to be most intimately united to the earthly calling,—is life in following Christ. He upon whom the revelation of Christ has not yet dawned, on him the idea of humanity has also not yet dawned.

### § 127.

While we *serve* in both the heavenly and the earthly calling,—for an alternative must here be excluded,—we do not serve two masters, but one. It is only one will that “is to be done in heaven and on earth,” in heavenly and earthly things. Our earthly day’s work we do, not merely for man’s sake, not merely to our glory, but for God’s sake and to God’s glory, after the example of the Saviour, who approved Himself on earth in all things as the faithful servant of the Lord, and whose word is, “Must I not be about my Father’s business?” (Luke ii. 49). But this does not mean that our action is to have an immediately religious impress, and to display, as it were, its Christliness. It is a pietistic requirement, that even the handiwork of a shoemaker or a tailor must have a Christian impress. When Paul wrought his carpets and tents, he wrought on them assuredly not otherwise than other capable carpet-weavers at that time. When Peter launched out into the deep to catch fish, he assuredly cast out his nets like other capable fishermen. Regarded from without, and materially, no difference exists between the handiwork of a Christian and that which is



wrought by a non-Christian, except the activity be expressly transferred into the religious sphere as such. On the contrary, the difference lies in the disposition with which the work is done, and consequently also in the intention and spirit spread over the work, especially the stamp of *purity* and *unblameableness* which is impressed upon it. The difference consists in this, that while a Christian performs the work of his temporal calling, he likewise also works as well as prays for the coming of God's kingdom in himself and outside of him. He works for the coming of God's kingdom within him; for he knows that the most proper meaning and the deepest importance of that, his bodily, earthly working, does not lie in that working itself, nor in what he thereby accomplishes in the world, but in this, that it becomes for himself a means of education for his own perfection, for the growth and ripening of his inner man, which amid all this work is to be more deeply rooted in faith, obedience, and love. But he works also for the coming of the kingdom of God outside of him; for he knows that this whole earthly order of things, in which also the single day's work obligatory on him occupies its appointed place assigned by God Himself, bears its last object not in itself, but has a purposeful meaning for God's kingdom that is to come to us. Nevertheless he works with all energy for his earthly problem; for it is that problem that is to be solved just *now*, according to the requirements of the divine economy addressed to *him*, the problem, the fulfilment of which the great Educator of the human race just now requires of him, and that in the place in which he has been put in the present school-class of humanity. It is this work that the great Master-builder requires of him if he will become his helper and co-worker on the temple of humanity, and therewith likewise on the temple of God's kingdom in humanity. But what place we are to occupy in the great varied multitude of builders, who work from one century to another on the great temple, depends solely on the will of the heavenly Master-builder. It becomes us only to be faithful over a little. Yet it holds true of us all, that our work in the moral upbuilding of humanity can in many respects be nothing else than a participation in the first preparations and preliminary works, very often only a work on the scaffold of that building, which in more than one

respect meanwhile is only a building of the future, our working and doing often only the labour of a hodman, whose task is limited to bringing together materials for the building. The great work of civilisation, which in our days is praised by so many loud voices, and which sets innumerable labourers in motion, what is it but a labour on the external works of the moral world-building, a labour for the purpose of presenting the foundation and the first conditions for that building? And our scientific and philosophic systems, our state constitutions, are in many cases nothing but scaffolds, preliminary lath and timber work for actual buildings of the future. And even when one succeeds in creating an actual edifice, does this afford, as a rule, more than a temporary dwelling, whether for a longer or shorter course of years, to be thereafter pulled down again? Not to mention those poetic or philosophic erections, mere booths and tents, which, scarcely taken possession of, must soon be again vacated. Nevertheless these scaffolds must be reared, these preliminary labours done, these materials provided, these often so subordinate helps procured, this accumulated rubbish put aside, these stones dug out of the way, these perishing buildings erected, here in great and there in small style; and from generation to generation that must so proceed, until, in place of this imperfect part-work, the eternally continuing, the completed temple-building can come. The individuals who are exclusively absorbed in their earthly calling, without connecting it with the heavenly, such as regulate their life after the previously mentioned morality (that confined to this life), are indeed in their way co-workers also on this building, and at any rate furnish stuff and material, even though they for their part have built on loose sand. And granted also that it is a higher idea for which they devote their life, yet they ever remain only unconscious co-workers. They have not seen the Master-builder, and also know not the proper plan of the building. Only to believers—and even should these only perform the humblest hodman's service—has the Master-builder revealed Himself; to them alone has He shown the sketch of the great building, and given the promise that they shall once be partakers of it ("dwell in His temple"), provided they remain on the foundation of rock and are faithful over a few things (Matt. vii. 24 f., xxv. 21).

## § 128.

We are to show faithfulness in our calling, conscientious fulfilment of duty in exercising our calling as a service of our Lord. For this humble self-limitation is requisite, which will be nothing else than that for which God has placed us, will not serve the community with a gift which we have not received, with works and performances for which we have not the calling, but with the gift that we really have received, and which we are therefore to stir up and preserve, protect and further educate (compare the Lord's parable of the entrusted pounds, Luke xix. 12 ff.). John the Baptist, Joseph the foster-father of Jesus, are examples of men who in humble self-limitation would be nothing else than that to which God had appointed and ordained them. Many men, if their eyes were opened to themselves, would perceive with pain how infinitely much they have lost through their pursuit of false ideals, and how infinitely much they could have attained, had they remained upon the way that God pointed out to them. It belongs also to fidelity in our calling that we employ all means to educate and make ourselves fit for it, and that we do not refuse to bear its burdens also.

Faithfulness in the special calling does not exclude, but rather includes, that we cultivate in us the sense and interest for all other callings and moral spheres of life, in which we cannot show ourselves active. For we only then rightly understand our own problem when we conceive it in connection with the universal problem of the totality. While we develop our productivity, we are likewise to develop our receptivity, our participation in all human efforts. He only who with energetic productivity in his special sphere combines all-sided receptivity, the open eye, looking round about, the universal interest, will work right in the centre of the social current, and will influence it salutarily.

## § 129.

True faithfulness in our calling is shown not only in the care, exercise, and development of that which is entrusted to us, but also in contending against the hindrances and obstacles

that place themselves in the way of our activity. An essential hindrance makes itself often felt by us in the limitation of our abilities and powers. Who does not often feel with grief that he cannot serve as he would like, because his powers fail him, because in this respect, in a word, certain wants and limitations are present with him, and because hereby more than one of the conditions fail him which are requisite for performing what is perfect? The point, then, is not only to labour to overcome these limits,—and certainly by diligence and continued effort much can be attained,—but also to be faithful over little, to be satisfied with God's grace, and to lay to heart that word which the Lord addressed to His disciples, "But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but to those for whom it is prepared" (by my Father) (Mark x. 40). Another hindrance lies in the resisting earthly stuff in which we must labour, the external and spiritless, the prosaic and trivial, which, in a word, is inseparable from all human activity, even the most spiritual, and which becomes even in such a one the most perceptible. Here arises the problem, to breathe spirit into the spiritless. And all human labour, from that of the thinker and artist down to that of the handicraftsman, aims at bottom at impressing by means of the spirit the stuff that one works, at impressing the stamp of the spirit upon it. That there is so much raw stuff in which we must toil, so much coarse work that must be done, so that even in the most spiritual work the old word is fulfilled, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread," because even the highest work of the spirit is not without trouble; in this we are to recognise a divine means of discipline and education, an ascetic means which our sinfulness makes necessary. Be it the clergyman, or the physician, or the warrior, be it the housewife or the mother, each one will find in his calling the ingredient of prose which is indispensable to the education of the man or the woman. In the triviality, pettiness, and pitifulness cleaving to all temporal things, with which we cannot avoid being more or less occupied, under all these great and small burdens and depressing circumstances, we are to be exercised in breaking our self-will, in self-denial, in obedience and patience, in order hereby gradually to ripen to a higher grade of moral freedom. A third hindrance of our activity

lies in the opposition of the surrounding world, so that with our efforts we so often accomplish nothing, and they remain without fruit. But just here appears the difference between the Christian and the merely worldly labourer. The worldly labourer is turned outwards, lost in his work; with him all depends on *what* he effects. The Christian labourer does not ask first and chiefly *what* he effects, not for the visible fruits, but whether he so executes his service *as* the Lord will have it executed. We are to do our day's work with the greatest possible energy, yea, are to work as if on our endurance and continuance all depended; but at the same time we are, as regards the possible result of our labour, to remain in believing resignation, believing surrender,—what the mystics of former times called holy indifference,—are also to be prepared for this, that possibly it will not be given to us to bring our labour to an end, that perhaps nothing will be accomplished by it, and that it—to speak with Fenelon—may please God to annihilate our work before our eyes, as one annihilates a spider's web with a broom. And this broom—oh how many philosophic, poetic, and political spider's webs, which were wrought with many years' unwearied diligence, has it already swept away! In the truly Christian worker, the practical is combined with the contemplative. He works standing in the Christian view of life, which is present to him, not only in the quiet hours of contemplation, but amid the work itself. And therefore he knows that, apart from the result of his work, it is not in vain. He knows that, what before and above all else is the Lord's will in our work, does not consist in what we bring to pass, but what we by means of our work ourselves *become*. And then he knows likewise that divine providence, without whose will no sparrow falls from the roof, extends also over each true thought, each word uttered in the spirit of truth, each good and well-meant effort, and weaves all this into his great work, although in quite another manner, and by entirely different ways from those that lie in our reckoning.



*Social Life and Solitude.*

## § 130.

In order that the earthly as well as the heavenly calling may be fulfilled, the duties must be harmonized, measure and limit be observed in the position and the procedure that one maintains between the inner antitheses within the personal life. As life in following Christ is at the same time lived for the perfecting of the community to which we belong, and for our personal perfection, it belongs to the righteousness of life that in the life of a Christian a regulated alternation takes place between social life and solitude. True social life leads to solitude; for how are we to carry out God's will in the community if we do not in solitude unite our will with the will of God, in prayer and quiet contemplation, in conscientious, earnest consideration and reflection, in those inner struggles in which our heart becomes firm? And in this our Lord Himself has left us an example (see General Part, § 82). And conversely, true life in solitude leads back again to the community; for that within us which during solitude is strengthened and renewed, is even love to God and men, is the ministering relation to the Lord, whereby we are brought to fulfil His will. On the one hand, we are to seek a wholesome protection in solitude against the dangers of social life, namely, dissipation, infection, and defilement by intercourse with others, loss of our individuality, the absorption of our inner man in externality and worldliness. On the other hand, we are to seek in social life a protection against the dangers of solitude. These dangers are shown us in the hermit's life, where they have become standing aberrations. The hermit flees from the corruption of the community; but he flees at the same time from the protecting and supporting power that lies in the community. He separates himself in his own personal relation to God, and thinks he can fight out his life's battle without being supported by the community, and the means of grace which the Lord has established in the community. This false self-confidence is punished in this way, that the world and its impure spirits follow the anchorite

with redoubled power into his desert, as we see in the struggles of Saint Antony with the demons, struggles in which it was sufficiently apparent that "it is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. ii. 18; compare Prov. xviii. 1). The anchorite despises the vanity of the world, but despises also the men that live in the world, and exalts himself above them in spiritual pride. He loves God, but denies love to men, wherefore his love to God is an egoistic care for his own salvation. This denial of love, this spiritual pride and false self-confidence, which in the struggle between flesh and spirit thinks it does not need the surrounding and helping power of the community, were the snares into which those old hermits fell. And the same snares still threaten a Christian everywhere, when in one-sided exaggeration he gives himself to life in solitude. While natures preponderantly inclined to the practical are in danger of being secularized by social life, of losing themselves in empty bustle, and missing the inner life, contemplative natures are mostly liable to yield to a propensity to solitude, and likewise to fall a prey to the many temptations of solitude. In the life of a Christian there must therefore be found a healthy union of practice and contemplation, contraries which find their unity in love, in surrender to the will of God, in the ministering relation to the Lord, which should present itself as well in the one as in the other of these two forms.

But in what way this ministering position must be regulated in the individual human life, how much must be allowed to contemplation, how much to practice, is conditioned by the individual organization, as also by the special calling of the individual. Herein each one must apply the true morality of moderation to himself, and hold the mean between the extremes. In one-sided and exclusive practice, the inner man is blunted and relaxed; and those who live exclusively in business, gradually get, so to say, an earth-rind round their soul, by which all susceptibility for higher impressions is smothered. However such men may show fidelity in their calling, yet they live continually in the sin of not *subordinating* the earthly to the heavenly calling. Saint Bernard has admirably developed this in his treatise *On Contemplation (de consideratione)*, which he dedicates to his former pupil, Pope Eugenius III., and in which he expresses the fear that his

pupil, who was now occupied by the many worldly affairs connected with the papal dignity, by the many processes and secular transactions in which he had to decide, by the daily overflow of men who brought before him not religious, but mainly worldly questions and affairs—might thus amid all these externalities lose his inner man. “I know what sweet rest was granted thee before. Now it pains thee that thou art torn away from the embraces of thy Rachel (Contemplation). But what cannot the power of custom do? What does not harden in the course of time? It now seems to thee intolerable. But when thou art somewhat accustomed to it, thou wilt find that it is not so burdensome after all; after some time thou wilt find those burdens light, at last even pleasant. I fear that thou mayest become at length quite hardened, and no more feel any void, any deprivation whatever. I fear that thy mind, amid this spirit-deadening business, may become quite unnerved, thy spirit emptied and deprived of grace.” Here Bernard has depicted the progressive secularization that enters with worldly business, when no counterpoise is afforded by the quiet hours of contemplation. “I do not exhort you entirely to break with these occupations, which is simply impossible, but only sometimes and at certain seasons to interrupt them. Thou art a man! Then show thy humanity, not only towards others, but also towards thyself, that thou mayest be a right, a whole man. That thy humanity may be healthy and perfect, let the arms that embrace all, embrace thyself also!<sup>1</sup> What does it avail that thou gainest others, if thou lose thyself? If *all* have thee, then be *thyself* one of those that have thee! Thou art a debtor to the wise and to the unwise (Rom. i. 14); be then also thine own debtor.”

While fully appropriating these thoughts, we must, on the other hand, insist that a life exclusively devoted to contemplation contradicts the example of Christ, denies love and duty, and becomes a life of spiritual pleasure-seeking and mystical dreams. Tauler justly says: “If God calls me to a sick person, or to the service of preaching, or to any other service of love, I must follow, although I am in the state of

<sup>1</sup> *Et tu homo es. Ergo ut integra sit et plena humanitas, colligat et te intra se sinus, qui omnes recipit.* Bernardus, *De consider.*, III. 1, cap. 5 (Migne. *Patrologia latina*, tom. clxxxii. p. 734).

highest contemplation." Further, it may be maintained that contemplation itself receives strength from the side of practice. Not those who exclusively contemplate become partakers of the deepest and strongest spiritual glances and views, but those in whom contemplation alternates with practice, with life in the fresh and sharp air of reality, with labour in hard matter, with the struggle against the world. There is so much that we must learn in an entirely different way from that of contemplation, and which they only know who have practised it. The more complete a human existence is, the more forcibly a union of the practical and the contemplative meets us in it. For that is the destination of man, that the utmost extremes of existence shall find in him their transforming point of union, infinite and finite, the heavenly and the earthly, the spiritual and the bodily, the finest and the coarsest. So we find it in the great followers of the Lord,—for example, in the Apostle Paul. He who has high revelations, and is caught up into the third heaven, must also endure the daily pressure of all the churches far and near, not merely in their higher, but also in their temporal affairs. He who in the Spirit searches the depths of the Godhead, and takes the deepest glances into God's purposes and economy, undertakes also distant, laborious, and dangerous journeys by land and sea, suffers shipwreck on the shore of Malta, and is amid the terrors of that shipwreck the one only who preserves presence of mind, and keeps the numerous crew in their senses. With the same freedom he moves in both elements, as well in the earthly as in the heavenly. A similar freedom to move in the one as in the other sphere of life meets us also in Luther.

### § 131.

The opposition between social life and solitude recurs as the opposition between *speech* and *silence*. The latter must also be observed in intercourse with men, no doubt, under certain imposed limitations. We must not only be able to keep the secrets of others entrusted to us, but also our own secret. There is a secret of sin as well as one of grace, which the individual is only to know for himself and with his God, and cannot utter before others without profanation. There is

a silence that is to be preserved amid those inner struggles, which we are to fight through alone, for our own training. The deepest sorrow (like the highest and most inward joy) is dumb, as we see in Mary at the cross. Hers is an unutterable, a nameless pain. There is a silence of resignation, under which a man bears his cross in quiet surrender, without giving utterance to the painful feeling, yea, in which he in other respects can be social and communicative, and even can bear an expression of cheerfulness, so that one is reminded of Christ's word, "But when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret" (Matt. vi. 17). There is a silence that one has to observe in times of misconception, of a misconception the mist of which cannot yet be dispersed, as we likewise see in Mary, who as against the world had to observe silence for misconception, while she was carrying the Saviour of the world in her womb. In this she found only one comfort, namely, in going to the hill country to the aged Elizabeth, who understood the Virgin's secret. Also against injuries experienced, as well as human baseness, the moral requirement may emerge to be silent—a silence that is as well the expression of meekness as of the feeling of internal dignity, of which an example is presented to us in the behaviour of the Lord before Herod, as well as before Pilate. But not merely in regard to the wrong we meet with may silence have its moral significance, yea, as against it appear as the morally lofty: the good and great *purpose* must also advance to ripeness in silence, as it may, by premature disclosure, and if too soon exposed to the air of publicity, be injured, weakened, yea, made to wither altogether.

Men who cannot be silent betray not only lack of self-control, but also lack of mental depth. Superficial natures have within them no reservoir, can contain nothing, but must at once yield up all. Deeper natures, again, can cherish and keep much in their heart. For them, amid inner and outer experiences, amid what they consider in quiet, and that which they meet with, circumstances and relations may occur in which, with the pain of love, they must lock up in themselves what they would willingly have revealed, but dare not at this moment reveal:



‘Bid me not speak, but bid me silent be,  
 For unto me my secret is a duty.  
 I fain would show now all my heart to thee,  
 Only hard fate will not allow it me.’

Yet there is a suspicious and soul-imperilling silence, against which we must be on our guard. Dangerous, yea, of the evil one, is such a silence as is the expression of an egoistic unfriendly closeness, with which a man at last in his pride, or self-consuming hypochondria, may perish from inner contradictions and confusions. Doubtful and dangerous is also a silence in which the feeling enclosed in our breast becomes so overmastering that it might rend the breast.<sup>1</sup> Against this one can seek an escape in prayer. Likewise an alleviation is afforded in confession, while the sufferer commits his secret to the breast of another man, whether it be a minister of the Church or a faithful friend. That we must be so frequently, at least in part, veiled and locked up to each other, rests upon the conditions of earthly development, belongs partly to our trial and exercise, partly to the necessarily quiet and hidden growth of our life. The goal towards which we must work is that we become ever more manifest one to the other in the all-illuminating unity of love. Therefore we must even now, so far as it is morally possible, seek our joy in mutual communication. Therefore an old poet says,<sup>2</sup> referring to the visit of Mary to Elizabeth: “Why do we always remain at home? Let us also go to the hill country, let us there speak one to the other, that the Spirit’s greeting may open the heart, so that it may become glad and spring; the Spirit in true faith may sing: My soul doth magnify the Lord.”

*Working and Enjoying.*

§ 132.

Not only the contrast of social life and solitude, practice and contemplation, speaking and silence, but also the

<sup>1</sup> As an example of a love-story, we may here mention Heiberg’s novel, *Das gefährliche Schweigen* (Poetische Schriften, Bd. x.).

<sup>2</sup> Namely, Ludwig Helmbold (born 1532, died 1598). S. Löber, *Das innere Leben*, S. 340.

commoner contrast between working and enjoying, labouring and resting, must be equalized, must be harmonized. The good things of life are not merely to be produced by our labour, our industry, in which we sacrifice ourselves for the community, but we have also to appropriate them, and that as human gifts as well as divine, and by means of this appropriation to enrich our personal life. Enjoyment is the individual satisfaction that we find in the appropriation of what is presented to us. The one sided ascetic view of life will allow justification and value to none, except only to the immediately religious enjoyment, and preaches in every other respect the duty of abstinence. The Christian view of life, again, says that the earth with all that it contains is the Lord's, that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused that is received with thanksgiving, that we should use the world as not abusing it (1 Tim. iv. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 31). At the marriage in Cana, in which our Saviour takes part, and where He works His first sign, changing water into wine, He reveals the contrast of the healthy tendency of life as against the ascetic, against John the Baptist, who lives in the wilderness. And in letting Himself be anointed by Mary in Bethany, He speaks in defence of a luxury in which that which in a material sense is noble and costly is offered in the service of the Spirit, and rebukes a view of life which considers a regard to the useful, to plain necessities, as the highest. "The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always" (John xii. 8). If you really *want* to help the poor, opportunity will always be found for this. But our existence is not so poor that there should not still be room, beside the care of the poor and the interests of necessity, for the poetry of life, and for the sacrifices that it requires. While Christianity asserts the right of enjoyment, the ethical character thereof rests not only on this, that sensual be subordinated to spiritual enjoyments, but on this, that we in the enjoyment acknowledge the gift of God, that every enjoyment in its deepest meaning serves to strengthen our relation of love to God, becomes to us a new inheritance and experience of God's mercy, while we "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. xxxiv. 9). "I could not drink water," says Master Eckart, "if there were not something of God in

it ;" and we add, we would not drink from the refreshing springs of nature, of poetry and art, were there not something of God therein, something of His eternal power and Godhead. The ethical character of enjoyment lies further in this, that it is conditioned by one's own activity, by the work of moral freedom of will. For there is, to those who withdraw from that work, only a spiritless enjoyment. Only for him who himself works at his soul's salvation, exists the comfort of reconciliation, and joy in the word of God and the facts of His revelation ; only to the higher, inspired endeavour, do science and art open a world of ideals ; and only sacrificing love and fidelity knows the blessings of communion and of intimate social life. As the union of productivity and appropriation, life is a rhythmical alternation of working and enjoying, of labour and rest. True rest is not only a pause during which new strength is gathered, not only a breathing-time after the exertion and straining of our powers, as that is inseparable from labour, which strives to work the idea into resisting matter, and so not a mere liberation. True self-conscious rest (cessation from labour) is a positive enjoyment of the *unity of life*, in that our personal life is blended with the *whole*. If we really repose in the glory of nature, or in the realm of art, we feel ourselves not only redeemed from the burden of toil and of finitude, but have likewise an increased joy in existence, in that our special life unites with the life of the whole, to whose beneficent currents we yield ourselves. We are raised above our specialty, and feel ourselves only as men. Even therefore is the highest rest, rest (cessation from labour) in God. It is an ordinance full of wisdom, that this relation between labour and rest finds expression also outwardly (parochially and civilly) in the alternation of workdays and holidays.

It belongs also to the right relation between labour and rest, that we allow no longer time to sleep than is necessary for the daily renovation of our life. That we must sleep away so great a portion of our earthly existence, must daily sink back again into a state of passivity that is akin to death, we have in common with all that lives on earth. In the whole domain of nature, in plants and animals, this

sinking back occurs, sleep asserts its claims. Christ also, by becoming man, subjected Himself to this human necessity of nature, which, however, He dominated ethically by spending the night awake as often as His calling required, and slept again by day, as on the Lake of Gennesaret in the midst of the storm (Matt. viii. 24).<sup>1</sup>

*Temptation and Assault.—Suffering.*

§ 133.

The harmonies of life are disturbed by disharmonies, which are to be resolved in a higher harmony. For our education, as well for this earth as for heaven, God has appointed temptations and sufferings in our life. Whether the man works for human society, or specially for his own perfection, he will neither be exempt from a history of temptation nor from a history of suffering. So far as the temptations are appointed by God, they are no temptations to evil, but *trials, proofs*, aiming to make the undecided one decided, the virtue as yet unproved approved and unquestionable, the Christian's "calling and election sure" (2 Peter i. 10). From this point of view we must understand what the apostle says when he would comfort the Christians in their trouble, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Jas. i. 2). The apostle in this looks to the divine purpose, namely, the firmness and immoveableness in good to be attained, as the end of the divine guidance and education. So far, again, as it is "the devil, the world, and the flesh" from which temptations come, they are incentives to evil. And from the same point of view we must understand why the Redeemer teaches us to pray to our heavenly Father, "Lead us not into temptation." In this prayer we are to confess our weakness, our impotence, therefore our dread of getting into *situations* through which we might fall into temptation. The *alluring* temptations occur, as a rule, in the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> After the resurrection, that is, the dawn of the new, perfect existence, free from nature, there will be no more sleep. The spirits also do not sleep; the angels as little as the demons.

the Christian life, the *threatening* again at a later period. The Lord has gained the victory over the one as over the other,—in the wilderness over the alluring, in Gethsemane over the threatening temptations.

### § 134.

For the regenerate, temptation has another and a higher meaning than for the unregenerate man. The latter lives under the power of sin; and however high he may stand in a moral aspect, so far, namely, as he is considered from the point of view of a heathen morality, yet he is included in the chief and root sin in which the whole of merely human morality is embraced, namely, *unbelief*; he lives in revolt and separation from God. In the regenerate, again, the fellowship of God is restored in faith. The power of sin is broken, and the new life planted and founded in him. But regeneration is in the first place only in the centre; in the circumference there is still sin, which is to be slain, that the new birth may pervade the whole man more and more. Temptation, therefore, applies itself to the old man, in order to awaken a reaction against the new man, to bring to pass a relapse into the old sinful state.

Now, however variously the history of temptation may take shape in the life of this or that Christian, the chief temptations of the old man will ever recur, namely, both pride and sensuality. Yet they recur in a higher form in the regenerate, and that because he himself occupies a higher, yea, the highest step of the moral world. And because the Christian lives under the constant mutual action of freedom and grace, the temptation of pride lies near him, namely, to seek, independently of grace, to rise unto likeness to God, or to accept grace like a prey. The pride of *knowledge*, as well as the ~~pride that appears as~~ *fanaticism*, may here emerge in such manifestations as are impossible outside of Christianity. And further, because the contrast between flesh and spirit is a far deeper one than the contrast between reason and sensuality, the temptation to sensuality, and every falling into sensuality, acquires in the regenerate a far more serious meaning than in heathen life. The legend of the Mount of



Venus, with its demoniac temptations, could only arise in the Christian world. In both the directions named it is and remains heathenism which comes forth as a *reaction* against Christianity in potentialized form; for the post-Christian heathenism is in a far deeper sense demoniac than the pre-Christian. The old heathenism knows nothing of *chastity*, as expressive of the dominion which the spirit of holiness exercises over the flesh, over the body as the temple of the Spirit; knows nothing of *humility* and the obedience of faith in ministering love. We may add that not only the temptations of sensuality and of pride, but also those of avarice and of greed acquire a far more serious character for those who have their proper home, their citizenship in heaven, than for those whose whole life and effort is only directed to this earth.

The course of temptation which the regenerate must pass through is partly conditioned by his individuality, partly by the situation in which he finds himself. In general it may be said that every regenerate one finds himself in the midst of Christendom surrounded by heathen ways. Whatever transforming influence Christianity has exercised on human and civil society, on institutions and manners, yet heathenism incessantly reacts, and aims at the erection of its kingdom. The tempting powers that are overcome by the Lord, as the head of His Church, react and rebel now against His kingdom, work against those that are members of His body. A Christian may appear to himself in the midst of Christendom now as in a desert surrounded by *beasts* (Mark i. 13), now as placed on a mountain where the spirit of this world shows him the splendid glories of this world, for example, political and national glories, now as standing on the pinnacle of the temple, where the spirits of darkness, disguised as angels of light, beckon to him. While he must fight the good fight, in exercising self-denial and fighting the powers of temptation *outside* of him, his severest struggle consists in having to fight the powers of temptation *in himself*. For although the old man is thrust out of the centre, dethroned, yet he constantly moves, and rests not with his deceitful lusts, as long as we still live in this flesh and blood.

## § 135.

If we are to fight the good fight, we must take care to gain a thorough knowledge of our individual dangers and temptations, of our weak sides, must conceive a proper distrust of ourselves, must learn proper foresight in regard to ourselves. Watch and pray! In the fight it is of the greatest importance to resist temptation in its first *beginning* (*principiis obsta*), that it grow not unperceived, get strong, and at length overcome us like a too mighty monster. Many of our falls into sin arise from this, that we in a half-unconscious state let a succession of sinful acts occur in us, which we do not further regard because they appear to us so trifling, till at last, after all is prepared, the catastrophe happens in which we are overcome and fall. The more a Christian learns to gain the victory in temptation by early showing himself the master, and gaining a battle, the more he progresses in holiness, so much the more will alluring temptations be changed for him into *sufferings*, into a painful *Vanitas vanitatum!* To Christ each alluring temptation was changed into a suffering; and as such He must also have felt it when the people shouted their applause to Him, and would take Him by force and make Him a king (John vi. 15). The danger enters when the temptation becomes our own *pleasure*, agrees with our inclination, and when the alluring phantasy-picture becomes the object of continuing delight (*delectatio morosa*), whereof we have treated more fully above (§ 15) in the exposition of Jas. i. 14.

While we watch over our heart that we may get the victory in temptation, we must also as far as possible go out of the way of the *occasion* thereto, and ward it off. There are temptations against which the only means is—flight. When the occasion has grown together, as it were, with our whole existence, the Saviour counsels us to tear ourselves violently asunder, however painful this sundering may be. “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should

perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. v. 29 f.). This figurative speech means to say, that as we amputate a single member, if the whole body can be saved thereby, even so must we separate from and renounce a single good, however precious and dear it may be to us, should it become a hindrance to the salvation of our soul. If, for instance, you stand in social connections, have a male or female friend through whom your soul sustains injury, break with them, however painful it may be to you; or if you exercise a talent, or love an artistic pleasure, which is quite allowable in itself, but for you involves temptations that you cannot withstand, take farewell of them, although they have become, as it were, a component part of your existence, and as dear and indispensable as your right hand or right eye, although by the want of them you should feel as if mutilated. For it is better for you to enter the kingdom of heaven one-eyed, or lame and a cripple, than that you, in a worldly sense, with a complete human existence, with the entire adornment and riches of this earthly life, should go to hell (compare Mark ix. 45-48).

### § 136.

The *threatening temptation* is the temptation to flee from suffering and the cross as intolerable, and thereby wilfully to sacrifice our obedient position towards God, our position as His children. The alluring is hidden under the threatening temptation. For fleeing from the cross points back to self-love, to love for the comfort and rest of this life, to the eudemonism of this present world. "Lord, spare Thyself: this shall not be unto Thee," said Peter to the Lord, when the latter spoke of His approaching suffering (Matt. xvi. 22). He will not give up his darling thought of an earthly Messiah and a kingdom of earthly bliss. But this "spare Thyself" is the prelude to a denial of the suffering Lord, to his "I know not the man." A frequently applied type for Christians who flee from the cross is that disciple who forsook the Apostle Paul during his sufferings in the Roman imprisonment, and of whom Paul writes: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world" (2 Tim. iv. 10).

There is no ground whatever for the assumption that Demas meant to turn his back upon Christianity itself, to cast from him faith in the cross of *Christ*. Only for *himself personally* he would have a Christianity in which there is no cross; and so far he no doubt belonged to the "*enemies of the cross of Christ*" (Phil. iii. 18); an enmity which in stronger or weaker measure is ever present in us all, and must be combated by us. Flight from the cross has a far more serious meaning for the regenerate than for the unregenerate; for the regenerate must know the secret of suffering; and it *becomes* us through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of God (Acts xiv. 22). By fleeing from the cross he in reality denies communion with the Lord, and for his part takes the side of the false, sensuous, and worldly Messial's kingdom.

### § 137.

A special kind of threatening temptation is the *assault*, a temptation which only the believer knows. The assault arises, as an attack upon the faith, from within the man himself. And it does not, like so many other temptations, attack faith only mediately, but directly and centrally. It is a state of anxiety and doubt, in which we thus have not to fight against an alluring temptation, dazzling the man with bright prospects, with something fair to see, promising him higher knowledge, and so on, but against a temptation that threatens a Christian with spiritual death, and threatens to rob him of that which is his dearest possession. It moves as a spiritual power in the gloom, dejection, unbelief of the old man, emerges from this dark region, and attacks the centre of the soul, its inmost relation to God, will bring the believer to the point of doubting the word and grace of God. The assault may move in an objective and a subjective direction,—it may relate, on the one hand, to God's revelation and His government of the world; on the other, to the relation of the individual personality to eternal salvation. In the first case the assailed one endures the incessant presentation of a contradiction, which meets him in the divine revelation and government of the world, and which tempts him to let go his faith, while he yet has the feeling that with

his faith he loses all and becomes boundlessly unhappy. This pathology, this feeling of pain, is inseparable from assault, and therefore only the believer can be assailed. Men who are without faith-experience, and only occupy themselves with Christianity in a purely scientific way (like so many theological critics), may indeed, without special assault in indifferent repose of soul, let fall one part of Christianity after the other. They have nothing to lose, and stand outside the whole matter. The assailed one, on the other hand, is distressed by the danger, far transcending all that is finite and temporal, of losing what is his life's last support, comfort, and refuge.

In Old Testament times, Job presents to us the picture of one sorely assailed. His temptation belongs to the first of the two directions, the objective. His internal suffering arises from a contradiction, insoluble to him, in the divine government of the world, in that he is unable to bring the *fatalities* befalling him into harmony with his faith in God's goodness and righteousness; and he expresses himself in long speeches in which faith struggles with doubt. In the New Testament, John the Baptist appears as such a tempted one, when from his prison he addresses the question to Christ, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" He suffers in consequence of a contradiction, to him insoluble, in the appearance of Christ, in that he thinks he must require quite different facts in proof of the true Messiah. In a dark hour he is tempted to mistake Christ and the cause of Christ, and therewith likewise to mistake himself, since he had exclusively found the purpose of his life in testifying of and preparing the way for *Him*, upon whose divine mission doubts had now risen within him. As a tempted one of this kind, we know also the doubting Thomas, the dejected one, who like the other disciples was assailed by the crucifixion of Christ, and became wavering in his faith, and now does not venture to believe in the resurrection, although there is nothing in the world in the truth of which he would rather have believed—in this the complete contrast to the modern faithless critics.

In these temptations we see a form of *offence*. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me," says Christ,



with reference to John (Matt. xi. 6). To be offended means so to take offence at what is holy, that one is thereby injured in his soul, that our faith in the good, our holiest conviction is shattered. Not only may one be offended by evil and its power in the world, so that one is thereby perplexed about the good and the power of good. One may also take offence at the holy itself, when it opposes our natural heart, or our previously formed conceptions. Offence may sometimes appear as *hatred and enmity against the holy*, as with the unbelieving Jews, as with Saul, when he, panting with rage, persecuted the Church of God. But it may also appear as a *suffering*, and in this form it shows itself in the temptation here referred to. The tempted one, that is, feels himself drawn to God's revelation; he recognises that on it the salvation of his soul depends; and yet that revelation offends him, by its peculiar character of secrecy, of veiling; yea, it so repels him, is so much in conflict with all his expectations and requirements, that he is tempted entirely to cast faith from him. These temptations can only be overcome by doing as Job at length did (xxxix. 37 f., xlii. 1-6), bowing before the inscrutable in God's works and leadings, by saying with Asaph, "*Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee*" (Ps. lxxiii. 23), because, although surrounded by mysteries, we yet keep in view the clear and irrefragable testimonies of God's grace and truth; and above all by doing as John the Baptist did, and applying to *Jesus Himself*, to get better information, by a thorough search into the whole appearance and personality of Christ, into the nature and power of His kingdom, laying to heart at the same time that word of the Lord to Thomas, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed" (John xx. 29).

But the temptation may also take another direction. Then the tempted one doubts not God's revelation, His wise and righteous government of the world, doubts not Christianity. *He doubts himself*, his personal salvation, whether *he* too dare appropriate the promises of Christianity and of God's grace. This temptation is exactly the opposite of that which we observe in Job and John the Baptist. In Job the temptation revolves round the form of his fate, in John round the question whether Christ is really the Redeemer, the Messiah.

But the tempted one of whom we now speak feels himself overwhelmed by his consciousness of sin, his feeling of guilt, feels himself unworthy of the grace of God, and does not venture to believe in the forgiveness of his sins. His sin stands uninterruptedly before him, and bars his view of grace. If he reads the promises of Scripture, he says: That is not written of me; it does not apply to me! This temptation must also be viewed as a trial of faith, into which God often lets His children fall, as we, for example, see in Luther, who was often and severely tempted in this way. The true sedative, the truly quieting means under this temptation, is only to be found in the tempted one reminding himself, or—as Luther often sent for his friends, to be comforted by them—letting others remind him, of the evangelical doctrine of *universal* grace, the truth that it is the earnest will of God that all men without exception, and so also this tempted one, should be saved, that God willeth not the death of any sinner, but that he be converted and live. Of the greatest importance, and especially advisable herein, is the *thought* (the vivid realization) of *our baptism*, by which God has received us into His covenant of grace. The tempted one must also remind himself, or be reminded, that we are justified before God for Christ's sake through faith alone, and not through our merit, not through the works of the law. Amid the struggles of the distressed conscience, this article cannot be enough emphasized and insisted on, and that in connection with baptism. For when the tempted one will not be comforted, it always proceeds from this, that he is one-sidedly holding by the legal standpoint, and is ever regarding himself as against the requirements of the law. After the law of holiness, he knows himself worthy of condemnation; and amid all the pains and terrors within him he finds a *painful pleasure* in dwelling on his own unhappy state as the state of one for ever lost, instead of looking away from himself, from his searching and brooding, and keeping his glance exclusively directed to the Saviour, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). When the tempted one will not be comforted at all, a secret offence and unbelief lies at the foundation of his temptation, which finds it inconceivable and self-contradictory.

dictory that the holy God could graciously forgive so great a sinner. But this is just the gospel, that God out of pure grace will give us exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think, will freely bestow a salvation which stands in no relation whatever to our desert; for else it would not be given us of grace. The tempted one must be reminded that it is the greatest sin not to believe in the forgiveness of sins, for unbelief is the sin of all sins, that severs us from life in the love of God. The tempted one must be reminded that if he despairs of himself because his faith is so weak, and but like a smoking wick, a weak faith is still a faith, and that we have God's word for us, assuring us that the Lord "will not quench the smoking wick, nor break the bruised reed" (Isa. xlii. 3). It is not this or that degree of faith by which a man is justified before God. It is Christ's merit, it is Christ Himself who is our righteousness, when He is appropriated in *sincere*, though it may be weak faith. And if the tempted one desires a sign, namely, a sign within him, a consciousness, a happy feeling, which is to testify to him that his sins are forgiven and that he is received to grace by God, here again we must urge, what we formerly urged in reference to prayer, that the training grace of God will certainly also give us that sign as soon as it is helpful, but that obedience is the right believing disposition, and that even in this consists the trial of faith—in believing God's word without a sign. We are to show "the obedience of faith" (Rom. i. 5), by faithfully adhering to the word, to baptism, absolution, and the communion.

Finally, we would refer to Luther's explanation that he gives to the sixth petition: Lead us not into temptation. "God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this prayer that God would guard and preserve us, that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive nor seduce us into superstition, despair, and other great shame and vice; and if we be tempted thereby, that we may yet prevail in the end, and gain the victory."

#### § 138.

When temptations and assaults are brought into connection with the devil and the demoniac kingdom, this is a mode of conception which many regard as superstition, the consistent

denial of which can only, however, be made by those who say, as Baader expresses it, "Il n'y a que nous, qui ont de l'esprit," that is, only we men possess spirit; but outside of us, whether above us, under us, or round about us, there is no spiritual being neither good nor bad, yea, not even God who is spirit. He who once takes up this position has thereby no doubt ensured himself also against demons, and declares in brief the whole to be delusion and subjective fancy-pictures. But if, again, we believe revelation, it tells us that a higher, a superhuman world of spirits is interwoven with the struggles of God's kingdom that take place here below, and that our flesh and the world are the *media*, serve as means and channels through which the demoniac temptation seeks to press in upon us, and, as it were, furnish the material from which the demons form their ensnaring phantasms. The temptation is demoniac in the same degree as it leads us back to a strange superhuman will, which contests the will of God and Christ within us, and will sever us from salvation in Christ. It has often been asked whether there are immediately demoniac temptations (that is, a direct, purely spiritual relation between the demons and man's soul), and how far these are to be distinguished from the mediate, and we by no means deny the possibility of a purely spiritual relation. But experimentally to point out an absolute boundary between the immediate and the mediate is impossible, and that because of the sin and darkness in the world and in ourselves. When it has been thought that the immediately demoniac is to be recognised in this, that suddenly bad, impure, godless, and blasphemous thoughts can arise in the soul, as thoughts that are strange to the man himself, and when reference has been made to the histories of the tempted, who against their will were plagued by such thoughts; this is no absolutely certain criterion, because such sudden thoughts on closer investigation are often to be referred to previous states of the soul, and at least are partly explicable as pictures suddenly emerging from the dark sinful nature-ground in man himself. For as man in the dark, nocturnal part of his nature bears an unconscious depth of good thoughts and powers, so he also hides therein an unconscious depth of bad thoughts and powers, which, as counterpart to those good genial rays that

pierce the soul like something strange and surprising to him, can break into the clearness of the consciousness. Only when He who is tempted is personally the sinless and Holy One, who can bring forth nothing but good from the depth of His heart, is the demoniac temptation at once to be recognised as such, as a power absolutely strange, existing entirely outside His being. With those, again, who themselves are infected with sin and the sinful nature-ground, the demoniac temptation is mostly recognisable only with those Christians who spiritually stand high, who are advanced in their holiness as in their activity for God's kingdom, and therefore, like Luther,—of whom it is said that, more than any one, he looked the devil in the face,—have to endure the severest contests with the prince of this world. On the other hand, the demoniac temptation will mostly quite discernibly emerge only with those who without resistance consent and fall a prey to it, by yielding themselves as instruments for the spirit of darkness (*e.g.* Judas Iscariot, and similar characters in life and literature). In an ethical point of view, the chief thing here is not to refine about the immediate and the mediate, and not merely earnestly to renounce the devil, but also all his ways, and all that is akin to him, considering well that demoniac temptation does not exclude but includes the temptation and enticement of each sinful man by his own evil lust also. Demoniac temptation only becomes dangerous to us when it finds a prop, a confederate in our own inclination. The demoniac temptation, *e.g.*, to ambition, is only dangerous when ambition—as Shakespeare has depicted it before our eyes in his *Macbeth*—is the man's personal tendency and passion. And the demoniac temptation to sacrifice our faith, and cast it behind us, only becomes dangerous when a man—as the poet has shown us in his *Faust*—is tempted by his own sceptical and ambitious thoughts.

Therefore we must watch over our heart above all things, but consider too that we have not only to contend with flesh and blood, but with the bad spirits under heaven, "who rule in the darkness of this world" (Eph. vi. 12), at the same time also quicken faith anew in Him who lives in us, who is greater and mightier than he that is in the world (1 John iv. 4). must strive in prayer and labour, and when it is needful,



with dietetic means also. For experience teaches that the body, and especially the nervous system, plays a great part particularly in temptations.

### § 139.

Turning now from temptation to the consideration of suffering in general, all sufferings that befall the believer in following Christ have this in common, that, despite the general connection that exists between suffering and sin, they are allotments of the disciplinary grace of God. The sufferings of a Christian are veils beneath which the love of God conceals itself. The sufferings that may befall a Christian may be regarded partly under the point of view of fatherly *chastisement*, partly under that of fatherly *trial*. Chastisement is not equivalent to retributive punishment, which is appointed to the ungodly. For the judgment upon the ungodly embraces only retribution as such, a revelation of God's righteousness, that they may receive what their deeds have deserved. In chastisement, again, although this includes punishment and retribution, yet paternal love predominates, which will lead and prepare the disciple to a renewed exercise of godliness. "No chastening for the present (that is, so long as it lasts) seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. iii. 19). This experience ever recurs in the history of God's children; and we may maintain that the higher a man stands in the kingdom of God, the more will he experience, internally or externally, the chastening hand. Precisely with the saints and elect God reckons exactly, and in them much is chastised which remains unchastised in those who stand on a lower stage. Every chastisement is likewise a trial; but every trial is not a chastisement. Trial as such contains nothing of punishment and retribution. It is so far an unmerited suffering, which may overtake the believer in the midst of the work of sanctification. It aims to establish his fidelity more deeply, to confirm his election (the consciousness that he is God's child), victoriously to reveal his love to God

as the pure, unselfish love, that God may be glorified in His servant. As regards the undeservedness in this kind of suffering, we may recall the word that the Lord spoke to the man born blind: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God may be manifest in him" (John ix. 3). Yet it must be remembered that this expression, "an undeserved suffering," must ever be limited, on account of the sinfulness cleaving to all and every one. Only in the case of Christ can we in the strictest sense speak of an unmerited suffering.

Whether now we are to understand our own sufferings as chastisements, or as purifying trials, or as both together, are questions to which each one must give the answer within himself. Two men may suffer the same thing, and yet it is not the same (*duo, quum patiuntur idem, non est idem*). For the moral state of the individual cannot be judged after his suffering; but the suffering must be judged after each one's moral state. But then, although in the suffering that befalls us there is ever something inscrutable, yet in very many cases we will discover an internal connection between our suffering and our individuality, and that the cross laid upon us is just the suffering that we needed for our exercise and confirmation, for attaining greater ripeness.

#### § 140.

The import of the sufferings of the believer, of the just, is the problem whose solution is striven for in one of the books of the Old Testament, namely, the *book of Job*, that wonderful work, that is among the highest that sacred poetry has produced, whether we regard the descriptions of nature contained in it, the exhibition of the mysteries of the visible creation, or its psychological descriptions, its exhibition of the mysteries of the human soul, the suffering human soul (wherefore also for both the greatest poets, Shakespeare and Goethe, this poem has had the value of a fructifying fountain). In its range of ideas it is properly a work of the meditative *Wisdom* under the old covenant. It belongs also to the circle of the Old Testament books of wisdom, in which not the specially Israelitic and positively Mosaic forms the object of contemplation, but the universal human (as, *e.g.*, also in the

Proverbs and Ecclesiastes). It goes back to the original religion which existed independent of Abraham's, wherefore Franz Delitzsch has aptly designated the book of Job as a Melchizedek among the books of the Old Testament. Job is no Israelite, but a just man in the land of Uz, who believes in the living God, before whose face he has walked, but who by a succession of terror-messages that struck him one after the other, and finally by one of the most frightful diseases,—Satan smote him with boils from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, and he sat in the ashes and scraped himself with a potsherd,—was suddenly plunged from the highest step of earthly happiness into the deepest abyss of suffering and temptation, into a seemingly God-forsaken condition. The sting of these sufferings is the incomprehensibility, the mystery in them, that such a thing can befall the just. The solution of the riddle is given beforehand to the reader in the prologue in heaven, where God the Lord permits Satan to assail Job with every kind of plague, that his righteousness may be proved and approved, that the Lord, who sees to the issue of the sufferings, may be glorified in His servant. But to Job himself this riddle is impenetrable, and becomes only the more so by all the grounds of comfort of the friends, who, instead of extracting the sting of his suffering, press it in yet deeper, in that they are unable to give him any other interpretation and comfort but that his suffering must be a just punishment, or at least a retributive chastisement for some guilt, and they call him to sorrow and repentance. Job fights a tragic fight with the riddle of his life; for his suffering appears to him a fate, a blind destiny: the God in whom he believes changes for him into a fatalistic power, a God whose omnipotence is only a capricious, despotic power. The God of kindness seems to him to disappear; and yet he cannot give up believing confidence in Him. His discourse is an unbroken alternation of faith and unbelief, of humility and defiance, of hope and despair. Then there suddenly appears, in contrast to the three aged friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, the young *Elihu*, as representative of a new view of suffering. That Elihu indeed is to represent a new view already appears in the introduction of his discourse (chap. xxxii.): "Great men are not always

wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I will also speak; hear me; I also will show mine opinion.—For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.” Elihu is not what many would make him, a young philosophic phrasemaker, who boastfully praises a hollow wisdom. He has a really new wisdom to bring; but this has yet, like every new wisdom on its first appearance, the taste of new wine.

The mistake of the old view did not consist in conceiving suffering as punishment and as *retributive* chastisement, but in making this point of view the only one, embracing and explaining all. The new wine, the new wisdom by which Elihu is inspired, and by which his inmost being is pressed to utter it, is the conception according to which suffering is not merely retributive chastisement for a wrong committed, but also preventive, cleansing, and purifying trial. His view of sin approaches the evangelical standpoint, points to the many sins that are hidden from the view of the man himself, and to the acknowledgment and cleansing of which God will lead the man even through suffering. We also find in Elihu the conception of chastisement, but in a far wider meaning than his friends had formed it, in that he assumes into it the other conceptions of education, instruction, correction, by means of sufferings; and that Job truly needs correction appears even from his boasting of his own righteousness, wherewith he constantly appeals to his works. While Job complains that God regards him as his enemy, while he disputes with God, because he “will not give him an account of all that he does,” Elihu reminds him that men pay no regard to the voice of God’s grace, which so often speaks to them for their salvation. “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their chastisement,—(chastisement here means educative suffering, to the understanding of which He opens the ears of men),—that He may withdraw man from

his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" (chap. xxxiii. 14-18). Thus, amid suffering, Elihu points to God's grace. And in contrast to Satan, the accusing angel, who spies and discovers the sufferer's weakness, Elihu reminds him of this, that by the sufferer there also stands an angel of grace, "one of the thousands" of the heavenly hosts, an advocate and substitute, who leads the sufferer to faith, to humiliation before God, and to quiet surrender. "*He will pray to God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he shall see His face with joy; for He will render unto man his righteousness.*" The ever-recurring thought in Elihu is this: that as against God the Lord, Job and every man is wrong, and that humility alone as against Him is man's right position. "Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom (prudence). My desire is, that Job may be tried unto the (victorious) end, because of his answers for wicked men" (chap. xxxiv. 35 f.).

Meanwhile the deeper and more satisfying solution of the riddle is already given in the prologue, namely, that Job by no means suffers only for his guilt, but because God will be glorified in His servant, who, notwithstanding all trials and temptations, yet does not forsake his God, which serves to shame Satan, who, so to say, has lost his case,—a prelude to the infinitely greater case that he afterwards lost through Christ's sufferings,—and therewith *for edification, and as an example* for all who place their trust in God. Job and his friends know not this prologue performing in heaven, know not the plan and purpose of God. Were that and this known to them, they would not have got into all these perplexities. They, as it were, only represent persons in a drama, the connection of which they do not understand—herein, again, a type of us all, who possess only a partial knowledge of God's dealings with us, who, if this expression may be allowed us, are likewise unacquainted with the prologue in heaven preceding our life and all history, which we must know in order really to understand God's government and ways with us: wherefore we are directed, in humility, in unconditional obedience, to bow ourselves under God's unsearchable purpose. Elihu already recalled to mind the unfathomableness in the



wonders of the visible creation. But this unfathomableness, and likewise the requirement that we should hold fast to the invisible in humility and faith, even where we do not see, is expressed in the grand majestic discourse, in which at last the Lord Himself, after Elihu's discourse is ended,—without praising the latter, as his discourse was also insufficient, and without initiating Job into that which the prologue has revealed to us,—corrects His servant Job because of his folly in seeking to contend with God. Accordingly, the veil of unsearchableness is not lifted; but the sting of it, its bitterness, is taken from it by this, that it is God the Lord Himself who *reveals Himself to His servant Job*, and although correcting him, yet confesses him as His servant, wherefore Job here deeply humbles himself, and so attains to peace, while he says: "Therefore have I uttered that I understood not: things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.—Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (chap. xlii. 3, 6). For although face to face with an impenetrable secret, he is yet irradiated by heavenly light, and has the certainty that God accepts him.

The conclusive understanding of suffering appears in the book of Job not in any doctrine expressed by word, but in the actual close of the history, where Job's *sufferings result in glory*; he is restored to his earlier happy state, yea, higher than before. But just here is seen the great interval between the Old Testament and the New. For as Job lacks the view of the suffering of Christ, of the crucified Christ, who, amid all temptations, reveals to the believer a gracious God, while that his suffering likewise unveils the abyss of sin hidden in every man; and as Job lacks, with the full consciousness of sin, the comfort that springs from the cross of Christ, he must also lack the comfort which springs from this gospel passage: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26). The future glory beyond only glances through in single passages of the book of Job. Only in following Christ, only in Christian patience, the hope of glory soars aloft, where our every wherefore will be answered, where we will fully understand the heavenly purpose concerning us, and where we will recognise its full meaning after the *righteousness* of the Lord, not only the

judicial and retributive, but also the *distributive and all-adjusting* righteousness.

### § 141.

Having set forth suffering as chastisement and trial, we must mention yet a third class of sufferings, namely, sufferings for righteousness' sake, for Christ's, for the kingdom of God's sake, in which we can also include Job's sufferings in their wider sense, so far, namely, as they also are to serve to glorify God, that is, to establish more firmly the kingdom of God in the heart of man. In those sufferings for righteousness' sake is fulfilled in its deepest import that word of the Lord, "He who loseth his life for my sake, the same shall find it" (Matt. x. 39). Of sufferings for Christ's sake, the apostle speaks (Col. i. 24): "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." The meaning is, of course, not that something is lacking to the atoning suffering of Christ, that His atoning sacrifice is not perfect, not sufficient, but must be completed by continued atoning sacrifices, which is the error of the Romish Church. Rather the apostle will say that, like as Christ our head had to suffer for righteousness' sake, even so also His Church, the communion of His saints, of those justified by Him, must undergo sufferings and conflicts, that the kingdom of God may be extended on earth, in that His followers, like Himself, "are a sign that shall be spoken against in the world" (Luke ii. 34), and are to experience essentially the same sufferings from the world as the Lord Himself. Not alone martyrs and His great witnesses have experienced this. Nay, something of this each of His followers will have to experience in the opposition of the world to the confession of Christ, whether that opposition express itself in persecutions or in ignoring and contempt. Such sufferings may be embraced under the title "cross," that word being understood in its strictest meaning, because by them we approach most nearly to the sufferings of Christ. Yet the designation "cross" is also extended to the trials with which a Christian is visited, while we, when regarding the sufferings under the point of view of punishment or retributive chastisement, prefer to use the expression that "the

hand of the Lord" is laid upon the sufferer. But just because suffering for righteousness' sake is the highest of all Christian suffering, the Christian must carefully beware that he do not confound, without more ado, his personal concern, or, say, the cause of his Church party, with the cause of Christ, whence an imaginary martyrdom arises. Also, it must not be forgotten that sufferings that one suffers for God and His kingdom's sake are likewise to be viewed as sufferings for the man himself and his salvation's sake. Even of Christ's sufferings, which were all undertaken by Him for the kingdom of God's sake, it holds good that He Himself "*learned obedience* by the things that He suffered," and "by suffering must be made perfect" (Heb. ii. 10, v. 8 f.).

If we understand "the cross" in a wider sense, so that it embraces all sufferings so far as they are trials, we can distinguish a twofold cross. There is a cross, a suffering that is laid upon us without our will. We are, like that Simon of Cyrene (Mark xv. 21), *compelled* to bear it; for example, a sickness, the loss of a beloved one. But now all depends upon *how* we bear it, whether with resistance or in faith and obedience, in yielding ourselves to the will of God. There is also, however, another cross, which is not so much laid upon as offered, presented to us, and in which it depends upon our will, our free choice, whether we will accept it or leave it. If we decide henceforth to live our life in following Christ, that is equivalent to the decision to take up the cross, because we then have chosen a life of self-denial. When Luther felt called to testify against the corruption of the Church, he chose the cross after the example of Christ; for he could foresee all the opposition, all the enmity and persecution, all the dangers to which he exposed himself. But the same thing recurs in the smaller every-day relations, as often as the question is to make a sacrifice, to bear a burden, to engage in a contest, which one could as easily avoid. It is more convenient to remain in one's domestic and social quiet, than to come forth with the testimony for a good and righteous cause, when the latter has public opinion against it, and we might thereby in one respect or another injure ourselves, as it is called. In general calamities, like plague, war, or famine, it is more convenient to care for one-

self than to make sacrifices for the whole, perhaps with danger to health and life. It is more convenient to withdraw from a burdensome situation, in which one earns more unthankfulness than thanks for his labour, into quietness, than to remain in it because duty—which to the Christian means the same as God's will—requires it of us. In countless cases no compulsory duty can bring us to accept the cross, but only the duty of love. Could our glance penetrate into secrecy, we would see how the earth all around is full of the cross that men refused, or that they cast from them. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 10: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

#### § 142.

The sedatives, the grounds of quieting and comfort which we have to apply amid our sufferings, are different according to the nature of those sufferings. The chief sedative, the deepest and strongest ground of contentment, is the consciousness of the grace of God in Christ, the consciousness that we are beloved of God in Christ, that nothing can separate us from the love of God, and that all things must work for our good, if we love God (Rom. v. 5, viii. 38 f.). But this finds its special application in the different situations. If we must view our sufferings as chastisements, there must be a comfort for us in this, that they are fatherly chastisements, that aim at our salvation, our improvement, that we may bring forth the fruit of righteousness. Yea, there may be times in which we must repeat that word of the prophet, "I will bear the anger of the Lord, for I have sinned against Him" (Micah vii. 9), but in which we also, with this humiliation under the righteous hand of God, should wait on Him, in the firm confidence that He will again lift the light of His countenance upon us. When we, again, can regard our sufferings mainly as trials, our comfort lies in this, that these sufferings are to serve for our education, that within us a progress, a transformation into the more perfect may take place, which otherwise would not come to pass. They are to purify us like a fire, in which the dross is separated from the pure metal, in which also the finer egoism and pleasure-seeking is to be burnt out and consumed (1 Pet. i. 6 f.). And

sufferings not only serve to *purify*, but also to *edify*. They teach us self-knowledge ; for only in suffering do we become aware of very much on and in ourselves, which otherwise we would never notice and experience, learn also to know the world in its unsteadiness and unreliableness, learn to know God the Lord as the alone abiding and reliable One. They form us to more intimate communion with God, to surrender to God, to an intercourse of prayer with the Lord, such as is hardly to be learned in any way but this. They teach us to thank God for much for which we otherwise would certainly not have thanked Him, at least with all our heart. And as they train to surrender to God, and at the same time—provided they are understood and borne in the right way—make us more sympathetic for men's lots, milder, more forbearing with their weaknesses ; so they also train us to genuine freedom of spirit, to internal independence of the world and of worldly things. "My soul is like one that is weaned from his mother" (Ps. cxxxi. 3 ; comp. Phil. iv. 11-13). Certainly it is very painful to have to suffer, to lack, want, whatever it be, whether love, or honour, or health, or other good things of life ; very painful to have to fight the lonely fight with one's own heart. And only too often we behave in this not otherwise than the crying child which is taken from its mother's breast, and passionately desires to be put to the breast again. We would fain return again to the rest and comfort of life, to the sweet habit of existence, to the wonted unions of love and intercourse, to the recognition and applause of men. But it is so wholesome to us "to be weaned" from all that, as we simply can have no continuing place either in the one or in the other, as at last the whole fashion of this world is for us to pass away. All depends on this, that the inner transformation may take place. We are to cease to be children, and become of age, that we may go and stand alone. To this we must be trained by the struggle against hindrances and misfortunes, to which also belongs the resistance, the opposition we experience in our efforts, must be trained, and ripen to firmness of character, to independence. True, indeed, this success only befalls those who in obedience bow beneath the will of God. In the opposite case, suffering rather produces



bitterness against God and man, and the whole wretchedness of egoism.

But sufferings not only according to God's will serve to purify and edify, but also to *prevent* (prophylactically; compare Elihu in the book of Job). "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2 Cor. xii. 7). The apostle does not say he was exalted by the abundance of his revelations. He only says that he felt a temptation to this, and that his sufferings were given to him as a counterpoise, whether we understand by the stake or thorn in the flesh a strong inner temptation, or a suffering brought upon him by opponents, or, what may be the most probable, a severe and protracted bodily suffering. This is given him by God as a preventive, defensive, quenching means, and is ever anew to conduct him into the school and exercise of humility. The application is plain to all of us. Our sufferings are to help us to gain the victory over temptations, in which without them we might easily come to a fall. They may be compared to a drag which is put on a coach to keep it from rolling down with headlong rapidity.

What has been said above of the more earnest, deeply incisive sufferings, is also applicable to those disturbances, annoyances, discomforts, and plagues, mostly touching but the surface, which daily life brings with it, and which can so often make us impatient and excitable. In contesting these plagues, our mind is to be fashioned to freedom and repose, to what the quietists call "holy indifference" (passivity). Such daily recurring little plagues have also their prophylactic, defensive object. This especially applies to the little torments that our corporality causes us, and the care we have to employ to overcome them. Were they not present, we would be in danger of falling into a false spiritualism. As pure spirit-beings, we would be quite intolerable with our egoism. Therefore we need these bodily restraints.

#### § 143.

Under sore, mysterious allotments, like Job's sufferings, there is no better quietive than this: "Humble yourselves

therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. v. 6), and that with this we likewise renounce the unreasonable requirement, that already in the midst of time a theodicy shall be given us, that is, that God shall justify to us His government of the world, the ways of His providence, while we often forget how we ourselves are to be justified before God. We must familiarize ourselves with the thought, that so long as we only know a fragment of the divine government, and are not yet able to survey the connection between the whole and the individual, so long as we have not yet heard the "prologue in heaven," many an inquiry must remain unanswered, and we must keep alive in us the consciousness that as against God's wisdom our wisdom, even as against God's righteousness our righteousness is ever wrong. Instead of asking, Why? we must ask, Wherefore? what problems will God set us? what duties does He lay on me just now? And if it be said that that unanswered Why remains ever in the soul like a thorn, we remark, in reply, that the point of this thorn is broken off to the believer, who knows that he humbles himself not only under the hand of omnipotence, but also under the hand of wisdom and grace, and that the same hand that now bows him down will in due time raise him up. And although at the moment it is hidden from us when and how our God will exalt us, yet we know that the true exaltation of man consists in nothing else than the glorious liberty of the children of God.

A great error in which many men, meditating and brooding over their sufferings, are found, is that they regard their person as the proper centre of the world, and think that *they*, as *isolated* individuals, are the object of the divine government, while they ought to think that as individuals they are yet likewise *members* of the great whole. Now, since suffering is inseparable from the whole of this sinful world, the individual, who is a member of the whole, must also necessarily suffer, not merely for his own sake, but also for the whole. That the individual suffers with the whole is seen most strikingly in public calamities, social misfortunes, where the individual must bear his share of the general suffering. But, even apart from this natural connection, there are —

without the possibility of drawing a sharp, distinctly recognisable boundary—certain sufferings in the life of every man, which he bears not only for his own sake, but for the whole, for the entire race, people, family, be they moral and mental, or bodily sufferings, whether he have received them from the past as a sad inheritance, or as a burden rolled also upon his shoulders by the present. And there are individuals who can very properly be designated as the bearers and vessels of the general suffering, because in them the sufferings diffused over the whole appear in a greater concentration, as a disease diffused through the whole bodily organism may take its chief lodgment in particular organs. In such cases, however, the creature dare not argue with the Creator, nor the clay quarrel with the potter, and ask: Why hast Thou formed me thus? Why hast Thou assigned me just this place in Thy order of the world? Why hast Thou not given me a more favourable position, in which existence were more tolerable and comfortable, were more beautiful? And even if this world of sin and corruption is inconceivable without sufferings, why didst Thou not at least make an entirely different and more perfect division of them? Instead of darkening the counsel of God by such unreasonable speeches, the only right thing is to say, "I will be silent, and not open my mouth" (Ps. xxxix. 10), obediently to enter upon the task set us by God, to leave the division of the sufferings, their measure and limit, to the Almighty and alone Wise, in the confidence that He on that day will certainly justify Himself, not only in His judicial, but also in His *distributive* righteousness.

As a counterpoise to the one-sided, individualistic view of our sufferings, as also in order to lower our claims, it is advisable carefully and diligently to observe the sufferings of the whole, and then to ask ourselves, what right we have to be discharged from participation in these sufferings? We here mention Baruch, who, as scribe of the prophet Jeremiah, had to write down the severe words that God the Lord caused to be spoken by the prophet to His people (Jer. xlv.). Baruch himself felt very unhappy in those evil, disturbed, and joyless times. He complained: "Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing,

and I find no rest." But the Lord said to him: "Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. *And seekest thou great things for thyself?* Seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh (that is, upon the whole earth), saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest." Baruch is thus exhorted amid the general misfortune not to desire great things, and something extraordinary for himself; amid the everywhere prevalent unrest, not to claim for his own person mere quiet days. "Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey," it is then said, and by this the earthly life is meant, which God of special grace will preserve to him wherever he may be driven away. And indeed there are times of overthrow and of general devastation on earth when one must regard it as a gift of grace if a man can only prolong his earthly existence. But from the standpoint of Christianity, we can say that whatever fate may burst upon the earth and the individual, yet the Lord will at all times grant grace to His believing people that they may save their *soul*, that they may grasp and keep eternal life. But as regards earthly happiness, the claims we make of life, we all need the exhortation: Thou seekest great things for thyself: seek them not. Behold these great revolutions round about on earth; see how the proudest kingdoms dissolve and sink into dust: place before your eyes all the unhappiness, all the misery that prevails far and near in the world of man. Behold the terrors of war, the misery of poverty, in which thousands of your fellow-men must daily struggle for an existence that hovers on the borders of starvation: behold the misery of pestilence, devastating whole countries; see how death snatches away the living in masses, without regard to age and rank. And yet seekest thou great things for thyself? desirest amid this great world-calamity—and at all times this world is in trouble and great calamity—to have good and quiet days for thyself alone? Seek it not: think in what kind of a world thou art, and to what a race thou belongest. and thank thy God that for all this it is still given thee to save thy soul (comp. 1 Tim. vi. 6 ff.).

The noblest and highest form of suffering for the whole presents itself to us where God's grace will glorify itself in

the sufferers in such wise that they thereby become a *blessing for the whole*, for many of their fellow-men. Such a suffering form appears to us in Job, who suffered not only for his own sake, but likewise for the whole, so far as he was to stand as a picture of human misery, like a vessel in which human sufferings in special multitude and multiplicity should be collected, but which in this should glorify God, and at the same time should become to men a type of patience (Jas. v. 11), adapted to become, as well by his virtues as by his weaknesses, a mirror even for the latest generations. So also with those followers of Christ who have suffered persecutions for righteousness' sake, and thereby also for the whole. In them Christ is glorified, and they illumine their brethren as comforting lights. But in the wider sense of the word, it must be said that God will be glorified in all His believing ones in their sufferings, and that they are all called to give an edifying example to their fellow-men.

#### § 144.

The final aim of Christian self-love is the formation of the Christian character. But a fundamental feature of the Christian character is not only ministering love and devotion, but also "the liberty of the children of God." In making in the sequel Christian liberty the object of a fuller consideration, we enter on a new, relatively independent sphere, in which domain, however, love will still accompany us.

### II.—CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

#### § 145.

Only in the ministering demeanour of love, in devotion to God and His kingdom, to the earthly and the heavenly calling, to the special dealings of God with us, is true liberty developed and formed. The ideal of liberty, the ideal of independence and *self-dependence*, forms indeed the opposite of the ideal of surrender, of love and obedience, or of service, but yet only attains its truth and realization in unity



with it. Internal liberty is the condition of love; but it is also its noble fruit, its result. Only the will expressed by the spirit of surrender, of love, and of obedience is the *true* character. Whether we consider the heathen or the Christian character, we will still adduce the following as the general (formal) criterion of character:—freedom, self-determination, and self-dependence, independence of all that is extraneous and agreement with self. But the peculiarity (specific) of Christian character consists in this, that it will not be like the heathen, free and self-dependent without love, that it does not pursue the ideal of self-dependence as something isolated, but only in the subordination thereof under the ideal of surrender and of service. In contrast to heathenism (modern and ancient), in which the wise man will be free and self-dependent without God, we hold firm to the consciousness that only that existence can be called really free that lives and moves in full agreement with its proper being, that can unfold its powers unhindered and undisturbed. But the essence of man is the being in God's image; the destination of man is to find and gain himself in God, to be a law to himself in fulfilling God's law, to be a lord over all things in being God's servant, to be free under grace. God is the element of human volition; and each being can only be itself in its element. As the bird is only free in the element of air, the fish only in water, so man only in God, and in the fulness of His love. Without the fulness of love, liberty goes to ruin, remains only an empty, a merely formal self-dependence, must wither away and shrivel up for lack of true nourishment, of the true warmth of life, as plainly appears in the Stoics with all their declamations about the self-dependence and elevation of the human will. The *Autarkia* (self-sufficiency, *sibi sufficiens*) of the Stoics is, rightly viewed, at bottom nothing but a constant "sucking one's own paw." The formal (abstract) ego will feed itself from itself, but lacks that which can truly satisfy it, namely God, to whom it can surrender, and in the surrender gain itself as filled by God.

When the old mysticism says, "That is free which does not depend on another," it says what applies in its full import to no one but to God alone. But of man we can say,

He only is free who does not depend on anything else in false dependence. But in the same measure as a man increases in the relation of love to God, he becomes free from false dependence on himself, on the world, and on the things that are in the world, on which the heart of the natural man depends; yea, he becomes free and rid of untrue dependence on God, depends not in a bad, merely external sense on Him. For Christian communion with God excludes the relationship of bondage and of servile fear, in which the man stands to God not otherwise than the slave to his master, excludes also the pantheistic relation to the deity in which the man only adheres to the latter as the drop adheres to the ocean, soon to vanish in its infinite depth. In the Christian relation of man to God, true dependence is accompanied also by self-dependence, which corresponds to the position of a free and voluntary servant to his master, or of a child to his father.

When we now proceed to consider Christian liberty more closely, we do so under two chief points of view, namely, according to its position to the law of God, and its position to the world.

#### CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND THE LAW.

##### § 146.

“I pray God to make me free from God,” says Master Eckart. We cannot indeed appropriate this saying in the pantheistically tinged sense of the old mystic, but can in this sense: I pray God to make me free from the improper relation of dependence on Him, but to lead me into the genuine and true dependence on Him, to redeem me from the pressure of the law, which lies on my soul like a heavy burden. For as, according to Fr. Baader’s apt comparison, the air only weighs heavily on such bodies as are void of air, so God’s law, and so far God Himself, who reveals Himself by means of the law, rests like a heavy oppressive burden on the souls who have not God within them, to whom therefore the law, as soon as they become conscious of it, is only an inconvenient, burdensome requirement, that convinces them of the emptiness of their heart, of the impotence of

their will. But redemption from the pressure of the law is given us in the communion with God brought about by Christ. Through justifying faith the regenerate one is freed from the curse of the law, in that by grace he has received the forgiveness of sins, and is become a child of God; and in this new relation to God he receives the power for a development of life, with which he begins an entirely new attitude to the law; for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), and we love God with the love with which God loves us. Grace has become in us the principle of liberty, and we live our life after the impulse of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 14): "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are God's children."

Christian liberty stands therefore at once in opposition to antinomianism and to nomianism (lawlessness and legality). We here refer to the more detailed view that was given in our General Part of these false doctrines and tendencies of life, especially of antinomianism in its various ramifications (§ 126 ff.). A Christian has not liberty for "a cloak of maliciousness" (1 Pet. ii. 16); but, as God's servant, he denies the false geniality and the false emancipation that will make for itself an exception to the validity of the law that binds all others, yea, that will continue in sin that grace may become the mightier, or may show itself the richer (Rom. vi. 1). But Christian liberty is equally opposed also to nomianism, which places man only in an external relation to the law, the mere commandment, the mere imperative, while it does not become for him "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. i. 26), and without his own heart becoming homogeneous to the law. The principle in the life of a Christian is the unity of the law with freedom of the will, or, what is the same thing, the unity of freedom with grace, with God's love. And the more the new love, the new obedience, the new pleasure is diffused from the centre over the whole circumference of life, from the heart into the other spiritual as well as bodily organs, the more also will the whole life-walk show itself a walk in *truth* and *righteousness*. Such a Christian cannot but speak the truth; for he himself is true; the truth has passed over into his being. He cannot but deal justly and honestly, for, as Master Eckart says, "Right-

eousness has overpowered him ; he is laid hold of by righteousness, and is one with it." And so much the more will a Christian also be in the position to take the right attitude to what is allowed ("All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," says the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 23), and will understand how in this to unite his own liberty with a loving regard to others, especially to the weak ("Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth," 1 Cor. viii. 13) ; he will solve the questionable (casuistic) cases and collisions, not by rules which only lead into endless reflections about their applicability or inapplicability, but by immediate tact, and by the power of the personality. And while he feels no more the pressure of the law, neither will he feel the pressure of *time*, which will appear to him neither too long nor too short, because he will take the moment into the service of the spirit, and will transfigure time into a form, a vessel for the eternal. He will gain the victory over the power of time, that withers and makes all old ; for "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16).

True, however, this ideal only becomes approximately realized. We *are* God's children only so that we likewise are to *become* such. As long as we wander in this temporal life, the contrast between ideal and reality remains. No one attains to a perfectly harmonious life of liberty this side the grave. As long as we are in the tabernacle, this mortal body, as long as we live in the flesh, we groan and are burdened ; and the glorious liberty of the children of God, after which the creature longs with us, can only begin with the redemption of our body (Rom. viii. 21 f.). A Christian will therefore all his life need what our old Church doctors called "the third use of the law" (*tertius usus legis*), of the law as far as it is also valid for the regenerate. Earnest Christians are on their guard against being done too soon with the *discipline* of the law, which leads only to an imaginary "evangelical" liberty, resting upon self-deception. A Christian will hardly be able to avoid times in which, though in the state of grace, he feels himself *partially under* the law, feels himself involved in the opposition be-

tween duty and inclination, between obedience and love. Yea, hours may come in the life of a Christian, when, in the struggle between spirit and flesh, he must exclaim with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But assuredly these states will more and more disappear through the progressive victory of the spirit.

### § 147.

After what is here said, one can estimate an objection which is raised against Christianity from the standpoint of modern humanism. Namely, it is asked, What advantage, then, have the Christians, if the contrast between ideal and reality, between duty and inclination, which we have denounced on the non-Christian standpoints, yet recurs in Christianity? When we spoke above of Schiller and the æsthetic education, through which the contrast between duty and inclination is supposed to be overcome, and a harmonious morality brought to pass, it was urged as an actual truth that this dualism is not overcome by the natural means of man, but solely and alone in the power of regeneration. And now we ourselves admit that, despite of regeneration, even in the Christian life there is still found a disharmony between ideal and reality, yea, that there are also states in which the soul is "under the law." It is asked, Wherein, then, consists the essential difference between a believing Christian and such a non-Christian as with enthusiasm strives after the ideal of liberty, although in many cases he is not able to realize it, and is again involved in the struggle between duty and inclination? Is it not exactly so with you Christians also, as yourselves confess? And as those who place themselves outside of Christianity have a very special interest in pointing out blots and defects in the life of Christians, for which they have so sharp an eye, and in which they seek and suppose they find a justification for themselves for their refusal to have anything more to do with Christianity, they raise the question whether really many a non-Christian does not present an existence more harmonious, in a moral point of view, than many even among the better Christians? and whether the supposed advantage of the Christians does



not in the end amount to a phantasy, an imagination, because the unsettled dissension between ideal and reality is simply the lot of humanity? and so whether the great thing for every one is not earnest moral effort? That this in all remains, it is true, a fragment, is what must be accepted with resignation.

As is so often the case in the attacks upon Christianity, this objection leaves on one side the proper fundamental question, and moves outside the internal connection of the matter in question. We admit willingly, and to our humiliation, that not seldom in this or that point even good Christians in respect of moral conduct may be excelled by a non-Christian. Nevertheless we declare with all emphasis, that viewing their life in its totality, the Christians surpass the non-Christians in that which is essential in life. For even then, when a Christian must complain, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" even when he has to contend with a sinful weakness, a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. xii. 7), with which a morally earnest heathen has not to contend, yet he can break off his complaint and say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ" (Rom. vii. 25); he still bears in his inmost being *reconciliation* and *peace*, because he knows himself redeemed of grace through the righteousness of faith, because he knows himself placed under the protection of saving, paternally training grace—a *certainty* which a non-Christian does not know, as he in his inmost being is unreconciled towards God, and just here carries about with him the deepest dissonance. Then also a believing Christian possesses the *power* for progressive conflict and victory over sin and the world, the power of *grace* awaiting to the unbeliever, the heathen, who is fully given over in his philosophic righteousness to the powers of nature. That Christians often omit to make use of this power of God, which amid all human weakness fulfils its work on and in us, is no disproof of the presence and efficacy thereof. And to mention only one thing, the Christian possesses, in *prayer in the name of Jesus*, a means to draw down higher powers to himself, of which a non-Christian can never be a partaker. And, finally, however slow the progress, in whatever degree Christian virtue

remains a mere fragment even to the grave; yet the Christian possesses a living *hope* of ultimate perfection, which the heathen in the like case must lack. For the heathen (the modern, as he of olden time) is with his philosophic righteousness either entirely without hope, completely uncertain what will become of him in the end, or he leans on an imagined, hovering, and flickering hope of immortality, which in the struggles of life can afford no support, and at best is a feeble reflection of the Christian hope.

#### § 148.

But what has been said of the relation to the law, applies also to the relation to authority. Liberation from the bondage of the law is likewise also liberation from the bondage of authority. We mean by this especially the relation to the divine truth, and have in view as well divine as human authority. As Christianity has emancipated men from spiritual and bodily bondage, that they may appropriate (or also reject) the gospel of redemption quite freely, no human power may place itself as a hindrance between man and the divine truth. A chief part of evangelical liberty which has been recovered by the Reformation consists in this, that a Christian man is free from the yoke of human laws, from the papacy, from ecclesiastical doctrines that have no ground in the word and Spirit of God; but therewith also free from the authority of all human views and doctrines which do not agree with God's word, from the authority of the time-spirit, the so-called public opinion, from what are called the requirements of the time, wherein the true and false are ever mixed up together, and which one therefore dare not accept without careful sifting; therewith also free from the authority of the heads of church parties, who often set forth their contentions in the form of prophetic utterances, when it becomes our task to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). True, there is a stage in our development when we cannot do otherwise than lean upon human authority, and must be content to have the truth at second-hand. That is the stage of minority. We believe, then, on the authority of parents and teachers, of the wise and experienced, which

pledges itself to us that what is told us is also so indeed. But when we have attained our majority, and are ourselves in a position to judge and to decide, to test and undertake the responsibility for our convictions, then, with all recognition and regard towards human teachers, every human authority will have but a relative importance for us. Above all, we must shape out our own conviction as regards the highest truth and the matter of salvation, by placing ourselves in a direct relation to the truth, and not only to the views that others have of the truth. And then it becomes us also to manifest immovable fidelity towards recognised truth, even granting that it should have the majority of our contemporaries and the time-spirit against it. "Ye are bought with a price ; be not the servants of men" (1 Cor. vii. 23).

But the Reformation has *not* freed us from the yoke of human opinions and laws in order to free us from all and every authority, but because it would lead us back to the absolute authority, to God in Christ. But even then there is still a relation of authority from which we must become inwardly free. And here again that saying of Master Eckart may be recalled, "I pray God to make me free from God," namely, from a merely external relation of dependence, an oppressive and narrowing relation of bondage to God, viewed as normal by the papists. But the evangelical relation between authority and freedom is this, that the gospel of Christ, and that independent of frail human guarantees, *attests itself* to the consciousness, to the conscience of men, through its original power of truth and grace, as the sun in the heaven proves its illuminating and warming power to every creature that is not placed outside the domain of its influence ; that Christ's is no merely external, but through the relation of our free subordination likewise becomes an internal authority, and in this unity of its outward and inward revelation, as authority of truth and grace, not only shows itself confirming and promoting true freedom, but also communicating power, dispensing light and quickening. Then we understand from our inmost experience, and ourselves realize that word of Christ, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 31 f.).

Still, what we said before of the relation of freedom to the law recurs here also. Even when in the centre of our life the unity of authority and liberty is restored, it is so therefore by no means at all points of the circumference. There may remain in the revelation of Christ very many points where His authority as yet stands over against us only as external, without this outward having become an inward. Are we in one respect already become free by Christ, and are continually kept spiritually free by Him, yet we are on other sides in the state of nonage; and if we may in one respect appropriate to ourselves His word (John xv. 15), "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends," yet in another respect we are servants who do *not yet* know what the Lord doeth. Certain words of Christ may also seem to us like a "hard saying" (John vi. 60); certain events in His life may be dark to us, which we could not yet inly appropriate. Yet it becomes us to bow under the one as under the others, and in humility to expect that the right understanding will be given us when we have become ripe to receive it. And that in His words there is much which we cannot yet, or only very imperfectly, appropriate, follows quite naturally from this, that His words are designed not merely for a single time, but for all times, and that their entire riches will only be displayed in the last times, which is equally applicable also to His works and to His life's destinies. Therefore we bow ourselves under His testimony, even where we do not understand it, where it stands before us only as an external authority. But we could not do that if He had not, by the impression of His revelations as a whole, the impression of His whole personality, given us a witness within, in virtue of which we can say, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 68). The total impression of His revelation, combined with the deepest heart's experience made in following Him, is what also guarantees to us the part whose truth and import are not yet apparent to us.

Those who hold no external authority valid in regard to the knowledge of the truth, forget that even in the natural things surrounding us there is much that we must accept on external authority. How many historical and physical truths

do we accept on external authority! How many of us are in a position to give an account of the grounds on which the Copernican system relies? and yet we accept it as right. True, however, we must, in order to accept it, be convinced of the reliability of those who are our guarantors for it. And what holds good of natural things holds good also of supernatural. Here Christ stands before us as the true and faithful witness (Rev. iii. 14), as He who can say, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 11, 13). We regard Him as that one who has come to us men from an unknown land, that lies entirely beyond the domain of human discoveries, and of which He only can give us word (John i. 18). And if we accept His testimony, and *continue* in His words, He will also certainly lead us more and more, deeper and deeper into that land, and let us experience its glory.

#### LIBERTY AND THE WORLD.

##### *Temporal Goods and Evils.*

##### § 149.

In the same measure as our liberty, our moral volition and action, gains the normal relation to the law, it enters equally into the normal relation to the world, to temporal goods and evils. Only salvation, the eternal good, only communion with the Lord, is then the object of absolute search and pursuit; whereas blessedness, or the union of salvation and happiness, eternal and temporal good, whose conditions lie outside of us, honour in the world, domestic happiness and friendship, freedom from temporal cares, and noble pleasures of life, health and long life—all this is only conditionally pursued. Every one pictures to himself his ideal of blessedness in harmony with his individuality, wherefore it assumes as many different forms, and inclines to as many different hues, as there are different individuals. But if we are to pursue our ideal of



blessedness, without at the same time denying the ideal of salvation, we must pursue it as those who, so soon as the Lord requires it, are ready to sacrifice it. We must live our life as those that know that suffering and death have been associated with blessedness as its contrast; that as well blessedness as suffering, in their proper import, are means in the hand of God for our education; that God in His wisdom determines for each of His children just the measure of bliss and just the measure of suffering that is good for him, and that every ideal of bliss, if approximately realized, has yet but a soon vanishing reality.

### §.150.

Strict and consistent stoicism must hold temporal goods and evils as entirely indifferent or equivalent. Virtue alone is valuable, and can be realized in misfortune just as well as in prosperity, which are both to be regarded as accidents, or as effects of a blind fate. This is a view of things which, as Christians, we cannot approve, and do not share. For even if temporal goods and evils may be viewed *in abstracto* as indifferent for the eternal destiny of man, or as something that does not affect God's kingdom, yet the Christian belief in providence, which, it is true, stoicism knows nothing of, must impart to them a definite import, namely, an end in the educative dealings of providence with that individual. What we men designate accident, fortune, and misfortune, is changed by the all-pervading, all-guiding providence of God into a means for its man-educating government, is interwoven with the whole sum of appointments or dispensations which stamp their proper impress on the development of moral liberty, and thereby on the development of the soul's salvation. Temporal goods, if regarded not under the viewpoint of accident, but that of divine providence, are divine gifts, and likewise embrace weighty problems for the individual. Temporal evils mean problems that hide divine gifts and blessings in them, which the man is, by means of the work of the will's freedom, to develop from them and bring to light. But providence as little apportioned its gifts as its problems blindly. Whether, for instance, a man is placed

under such conditions of life that he can live like the rich man in the gospel, or whether in respect to his external situation he must live like a Lazarus, may appear to the worldly judgment a work of accident; but it is by no means indifferent to providence, to which all the hairs of our head are numbered, even if the wisdom at the foundation of it lies beyond our range of vision, and we are unfit to recognise the deeper correspondence which prevails between allotment and individuality, between the life's problem, life's trial, and man's soul.

But while temporal goods and evils are not indifferent, when viewed from the objective standpoint, namely, from the point of view of the divine providence, they are so just as little when viewed from the subjective view-point. A Christian cannot possibly occupy a position of stoical indifference to them. And even the Stoics were not consistent in practice, for among these things they made a difference between the Desirable, that which one must prefer (τὸ προηγμένον), and the Not-desirable or objectionable (τὸ ἀποπροηγμένον); and reckoned among the indifferent things in the strictest sense only that which is of so small worth or so entirely worthless that it can neither be an object of desire nor of aversion. Among the desirable things they reckoned good dispositions, beauty, strength, health, also riches, noble descent, and so on, but the opposite to these goods among the rejectable things.<sup>1</sup> But now, if a Christian were to regard temporal goods as entirely indifferent, he could neither thank God for temporal benefits, nor invoke Him for the averting of temporal evils, or pray for divine assistance to fight against or rightly employ them, which is all, however, inseparable from Christian life and endeavour. The gospel also expressly declares that temporal goods are not something indifferent, for it says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). For it is hereby said that also the rest may be desired by Christians, only not as the first. And to this also the apostle points when he says that "godliness has promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8). It must also be acknowledged that a certain measure of temporal goods belongs to a complete human existence on earth,

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, III. i. 241.

and that pleasure in life, the longing for a harmonious self-unfolding of life, and a full satisfaction of his needs, has been implanted in man by the Creator Himself. What herein comes into question is only the right subordination of the lower life to the higher, the honest application of the former, so as neither to over nor under-value it.

An overstrained asceticism, which has often appeared in the Christian Church, in its disregard of temporal goods, goes to the extreme of holding them as not at all intended to be enjoyed, but as merely intended *to be sacrificed*; for suffering is the only normal form of a Christian's life. Accordingly, this asceticism comes to over-estimate temporal *evils*, attributing to them an exclusive value. But such a view is also irreconcilable with apostolic Christianity. The Apostle Paul lays down the rule, "That both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 29 ff.). In this, then, he by no means says that a Christian is to renounce and separate himself from temporal goods; but he says that a Christian is to *have* them as one who has them not, and so is to be ever ready to yield them up as soon as the Lord requires it; is to desire them as one who does not desire them, that is, does not passionately covet them; is to sorrow at the loss of them as one who does not sorrow, that is, is not swallowed up in his sorrow. "*The fashion of this world passeth away.*" That is the frame of mind in which a Christian is to use this world. But amid this frame of mind there lives the hope of an eternal salvation and glory. If, then, a Christian, in prosperity as in adversity, is to preserve this frame, it may no doubt be said of the miserable one that in a certain respect he is nearer the truth and salvation than the happy one, in so far, namely, as the latter has the consciousness of the transitoriness and perishableness of this life in a merely *mental* fashion, that is, only as thought and imagination; while the wretched one, like Lazarus, has this consciousness at first hand, as an actual experience, a realization, and is internally nearer eternity; wherefore also the old "Preacher" (vii. 2) says, "It is better

to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting. Sorrow is better than laughter." But the following of Christ is to be carried out as well in the one form as in the other, as well in earthly prosperity as in suffering, after the measure that the educating and guiding wisdom of the Lord requires. Therefore also the apostle says (Phil. iv. 12 ff.), "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

How he inwardly stood related to earthly goods, of which he was independent, but which he yet did not despise when they were offered to him, because they served him as means for his moral personal life, Paul showed in the most beautiful way in the last days of his life, when the martyr death was appearing to him as the end. Eternity, the future glory into which he was soon to enter, before his eyes, he writes to his Timothy, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 6 ff.). Now, from the ascetic standpoint, whose essence is renunciation and contempt of the world, one might think that, to the man who was done with life, and had only in view the martyr death and the heavenly glory, all that is temporal must be entirely indifferent, and that he was far beyond wishing any *temporal refreshment* for himself for the short time that might still remain to him. But such is not the case. Immediately thereafter, and in the same epistle, he writes, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me" (iv. 9). He wishes his dear pupil to bear him company in his loneliness. He writes further, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring with thee" (iv. 13). He might use this cloak to warm himself in the cold prison. At the same time he writes, "Bring also the books, but especially the parchments" (iv. 13). In the solitude in which he is awaiting death, he will occupy his time with reading. An overstrained ascetic would have scorned all this, and have busied himself

exclusively in thoughts of the heavenly, would have "had no time" to think of these subordinate earthly things. Not so the apostle. He has time for these also, will still on earth enjoy the refreshment that the Lord allows him, will enjoy a friend in solitude, asks for books likewise in his loneliness, and a cloak for the cold.<sup>1</sup>

While now we judge temporal goods and evils from the point of view already laid down, we consider in what follows the chief manifestations of this most comprehensive contrast.

### *Honour and Dishonour.*

#### § 151.

If salvation and blessedness is the religious expression for the ideal of the personality, honour is the worldly expression. Internal honour (dignity), or the mystery of honour, as the individual's consciousness of his value in the moral order of the world, the individual's consciousness of his worth before God,—"By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10),—is inseparably connected with salvation itself. External honour again, is the acknowledgment which human society allows to the worth of the individual, or what we are in the idea of others, and is inseparable from our earthly calling, and the faithfulness connected with the exercise of the calling. For the rest, external, phenomenal (belonging to the world of appearance) honour is only a relative good. It is a good so far as it is a weighty condition of our activity, in order to accomplish something among men, but also because the man has a need rooted in his nature to be acknowledged and accredited in the consciousness of others; a need to be respected, which in its deepest root is connected with man's need to be loved and to love. This need to live in the consciousness of others, without respect to the gain or advantage which we may have from it, is revealed also in the importance that we attach to the memory that survives us, not only as regards fame, which can ever be the portion of but few, but also where an honourable name is in question, as the old saying has it:

<sup>1</sup> Compare Rich. Rothe, *Entwürfe zu den Abendandachten über die Briefe Pauli an den Timotheus und Titus*, p. 280 ff.



“Turn sin away from me and shame,  
That I may go into my grave with honourable name.”

We are therefore to strive to make ourselves *worthy* of external honour, which is an *ideal* good ; and if our honour be assailed, we are in case of necessity to defend ourselves. Indirectly, we at all times defend our assailed honour, if we, after the apostle's direction (1 Peter ii. 15), with well-doing, by good behaviour, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men ; when we thus let our actions speak, and by a consistent carrying out of our mode of action in the service of good, compel men to be convinced of the higher normality that dominates our conduct. But in certain circumstances it may also become necessary to give a direct account to ourselves ; and here we can point to the example of the Apostle Paul, when he is defending himself, for example, against those who had attacked his exercise of office, and would lower him in the regard of others, in that he not only asserts his official warrant and authority, but also his personal worth, his labours and sufferings for the cause of Christ, boasts himself, even if “foolishly” (*ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ*), because all human glory is nothing before the Lord, in whom alone may we glory (2 Cor. xi. 21 ff.). A defence after this example, which again refers back to the example of the Lord, who against the accusations of His opponents (John x. 32) refers to the good works that He had shown them from His Father, and asks them, “For which of these works do ye stone me ?”—such a self-defence, yea, such a self-praise, is only irreconcilable with a false humility, but not with the true. For true humility is the consciousness that we are nothing of ourselves, but are all that we are through the Lord alone ; but for that very reason faithfulness towards the Lord requires—not that we deny or undervalue the worth that God Himself, by nature as well as by grace, has imparted to us, but that we maintain it. Only false modesty is opposed by it, but not genuine ; for modesty is the consciousness of my own limited worth, in comparison with others ; but for this very reason fidelity to the community requires—not that I deny my real worth, or let it be denied by others, but that I maintain it within the proper limits. Right self-defence thus presupposes right self-knowledge ; and as the latter in so many cases is only relative, and affected

with deceitful seeming, self-defence, it is true, must be so too. But in the same measure as this last proceeds from true Christian self-knowledge, it becomes justified, and will then appear also with an impress in which are combined dignity and humility, self-respect and modesty. A bad way of maintaining injured honour is when one repays passion with passion, scolding with scolding. On the other hand, the application in certain cases of the weapon of irony and satire is not absolutely to be rejected,—whereof traces are even to be found in the Apostle Paul, when, for example, he designates his opponents as the “very high apostles,”—if, that is, the folly of the attack to be warded off can thereby be made strikingly manifest. Only, let such a thing never be done at the cost of love, in which respect the application of this weapon has its great dangers. A brutal and utterly abominable means is *duelling*, by which in reality nothing is proved, but, with levity, life, and all the higher goods of life, are placed in hazard. This immorality of the Middle Ages, which has continued to exist in some classes, will, it is to be hoped, soon be entered in the register of antiquated and vanished customs.

Thus, according to the above development, external phenomenal honour, or that which we are in the idea of others, must be ruled by the internal essential honour. False dependence on honour with men is to be viewed as a branch of the desire of the phenomenal, and appears now as vanity, now as the wish to please, to interest others, and constantly to receive outward proofs of the interest we produce in others; now as ambition, as the endeavour after an important position, eminence, and tokens of honour, while yet vanity and ambition very often shade into each other. But among their many very various shades, the false dependence on honour shows itself in this, that the *picture* of our person existing in the imagination of others is weightier to us than the essence and reality. This false dependence not only shows itself in him whose whole thought and effort is directed to *seeming* something externally without being it, to live a life of seeming in the imagination of others without corresponding reality; but also in him who in deed would like “to be something,” and pursues earnest aims, but who still besides regards “shining” in the eyes of the

world, and counting for something—and so the image and shadow he casts in the consciousness of others, the echo resounding in human society—as the indispensable thing. But by this very means it necessarily comes to this with the man, that he ceases in the full sense of the word “*to be*,” that he suffers shipwreck in honour with God. For he who at no price will dispense with honour with men is compelled to arrange his actions according to the claims of men, the requirements of the time-spirit, according to its standard of what deserves to be honoured. But one who places his life under a false standard, a counterfeit rule, thereby makes it impossible to himself to comply with what the divine will requires of him. “How can *ye* believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not *the honour that cometh from God only?*” (John v. 44). True, for men to receive and give honour among each other is in no way objectionable in itself: we are to “give honour to whom honour is due” (Rom. xiii. 7), and even so to accept also the honour that in truth belongs to us. But to give and receive honour by false measure and weight,—which ever happens where honour with God is not sought after, where the relation to God is not held as normative,—in this consists the blameableness. The conceptions of the Pharisees of what deserves to be honoured in human society were formed after the requirements of the time-spirit, which required an external sanctity, a sanctity impressed with a definite political and national stamp. In themselves passing as the personal representatives of what was supposed worthy of honour, they received honour from each other, and greeted each other in their on all hands acknowledged excellence, as down to the present day the representatives of the time-spirit, and the people’s leaders, receive honour one of the other, and mutually incense themselves. But as those did not seek honour with God, did not search earnestly in His word, did not go down into their own conscience, but only pursued an honour coming from without, they *could* not give Christ honour, could not believe in Him whose revelation, whose whole manifestation insisted on a thoroughly different standard of what deserved to be honoured; for to believe in Christ meant as much as to break with the time-spirit. Therefore every Christian, should his faith come into question, or his doing and omitting, must be able to say

with Paul, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment" (1 Cor. iv. 3), whereby the apostle expresses the infinitely relative import of human judgments and criticisms, to which is also to be added the incessant change of these judgments, their swift rebound to the opposite. The honour and respect which a Christian finds with men he must therefore "have as had he it not," being ever ready, when a change of popular favour occurs, to die and be extinguished in the idea of the people, or what comes to the same thing, only to live on as a caricature in their idea. In this also Christ will have us to be His followers. A Christian is to bear to be undeservedly mistaken, not with stoical proud contempt, that thinks too much honour is shown to men when any weight is attached to their judgments, nor yet with indifference, namely because one considers—and there is indeed much truth in it—that in general men only make extremely faulty pictures of each other, and there is an infinite difference between what a man is in himself and the image of his person mirrored in the opinion of others, and that therefore it may be at bottom very indifferent to us what others think or do not think. A Christian, knowing well that, according to the problem assigned to our earthly existence, men should mutually understand and so become manifest to each other, is to bear misconception with patience, and in the consciousness that the Lord knows him, in *that* self-respect that is rooted in humility, and even thereby is distinguished from that which the world designates noble pride, by which is generally understood a consciousness of one's own worth, which is very far from being received into the consciousness and communion of God. Finally, he must bear misconception in the comfortable hope that a day of revelation is coming—"when it will come to light" [English version, "in the day of visitation"] (1 Peter ii. 12)—often even in the present world, but absolutely certain, when all must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ (Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10). "*Cras mihi respondebit justitia mea*" (that is, *to-morrow* my righteous cause will answer for me), was the motto of Hans Tausen.<sup>1</sup> As the perfect example

<sup>1</sup> Hans Tausen, born in the year 1494, in the neighbourhood of Kiertemünde in Fiinen, became, after he had heard Luther and Melancthon for two years in Wittenberg, the reformer of the Danish Church.—A. M.

of patience and a pure conscience amid all the misconception of the world, the Saviour Himself stands before us in the history of His passion. Here is revealed in an absolute sense how different it is, on the one hand, to have honour with the Father; on the other, to have honour with men. And the more we make ourselves acquainted with the history of the passion, the sooner will we also acquire the right standard for estimating aright the answers that the time-spirit, the masses, the leaders of the people give to the question, What is truth? What is righteousness? the standard for the hosanna of the multitude, for the "Crucify Him!" of the same multitude. With every hosanna we should have *in mente* the corresponding "Crucify Him," and already bear in spirit, with all renown, every mark of honour we meet with, the corresponding blame and scorn that comes after. What we may observe in all spheres of life, viz. that the higher the cause and personality in question stands, the more unreliable is the judgment of the multitude upon them, the less does it matter to regard their honour or dishonour, is shown in the highest sense in reference to the relation to Christ and His cause. And for this very reason it becomes those who would be Christ's disciples and servants, to be ready to go on their way through honour and shame, through good and bad report, while they remain conscious that, as unknown and unconcerned, they *are yet known* (2 Cor. vi. 8 f.). The deepest pain for misconception experienced is the pain of *ignored* love. But here the example of Christ stands by our side, warranting us that we are known by God, and that a day will yet come when we shall also be known by men.

*Social Prosperity and Abandonment.*

§ 152.

Honour, or good name, in connection with an *activity in one's calling*, striving after the ideal, and founded on fruitful talent, may be fitly designated the highest among the relative goods of life. But there will still be a very essential lack in earthly bliss, if two things be not added which appear most desirable for private



life: *domestic happiness and friendship*. Yea, Aristotle regards friendship even as an indispensable happiness. In the further course of our contemplation we will view family life and friendship from another side. Here we view both as rightly desired relative goods, which, when given, one seeks to preserve to himself. They are goods, not only because in several respects they support and help us in the prosecution of our calling, but because the moral satisfaction of our need of love in the peace of the domestic hearth, in mutual confidence and cordial cohesion, in sympathetic participation in good and evil days, in mutually removing and bearing personal burdens, is *in itself* something desirable, and because herein also that utterance applies, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. ii. 18). Yet there is a false dependence on family life and friendship. Such a dependence arises—so far as not only *we have* family and friendship, but also *these have us*—when we let ourselves be so taken possession of by them, be ruled in such measure by their influence and by regard for them, that higher duties and higher bonds of love are set aside, and do not get justice. And in this relation, too, the example of the Lord is set before our eyes, how at the marriage of Cana He says to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (John ii. 4); or on that second occasion, when He is interrupted in the midst of His prophetic activity, because His mother and His brethren were standing without, and would speak with Him, how He then points to His disciples, and says, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" (Mark iii. 34); or how, on another occasion, He says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37). We are indeed to belong to them, then, but as if we belonged to them not, namely, so that we let not ourselves be hindered by them from fulfilling what we owe to our earthly and heavenly calling. And with this is inseparably connected that our loved ones must not be in an absolute sense indispensable to us, and that we are therefore to have them as if we had them not, that is, so that we are ready to part from and to lose them, if the will of God commands, and so that the thought of this possibility is always alive in us. To keep alive these thoughts in us will not cool our hearts towards them, but, on the contrary, move us to love them still more

tenderly, and rightly to use the hours of united life that are still granted us.

And when the said possibility becomes reality, in that our loved ones are called away by death, no stoical apathy is required of us, like that of the Stoic who, on the death of his son, said with indifference, "Why, I knew that he was mortal!" Yet there is a Christian repose of mind on the loss of our loved ones, which may be referred to what quietism understood by "holy indifference," in which the soul is powerfully penetrated by the consciousness of the evanescence of this life, the consciousness of eternity as alone essential and valuable—a repose of mind which, however, can only be the fruit of a deeply Christian development of life. For the individual need of love and the need of earthly props is deeply rooted in human nature, and every one who has not either killed the feeling of humanity in his breast, or else has learned, by a holy love to Christ and His kingdom, to die to all earthly blessedness, and in an eminent sense not to look to what is visible and temporal, but to what is unseen and eternal (2 Cor. iv. 18), will feel it as a cutting pain to have to leave those to whom he is joined by dear ties, especially when such a loss leaves him lonely and forsaken. The problem of a Christian is to bear such a cross in "patience and faith of the saints" (Rev. xiii. 10); to let the pain be glorified in the consciousness that when the Lord withdraws earthly supports from us, He will train and teach us to hold to Him as to our only support ("If I have but Thee, I ask for nothing in heaven and earth," Ps. lxxiii. 25), in the consciousness that we yet belong to a community surviving every earthly one, namely, the congregation of His saints in heaven and on earth; finally, in the hope that at last in His kingdom all they shall be reunited who truly belong to each other. The older we become, the more are these supports, one after the other, taken from us, that we may be weaned from the life on this earth, as the child is weaned from its mother, and so ripen for the future life beyond.

Still more deeply than by the departure of our nearest are we pained by the experience of unsteadiness and faithlessness on their side, when we are morally abandoned by them, because we, in their consciousness, in their love, as it were, die, and are

buried ; or, what is the same thing, because we are changed in their idea, and become other than we were before, although in reality we are still the same. Such an abandonment is in many cases not without guilt on our side ; and had we a richer measure of love, we would in no case so easily feel ourselves lonely and forsaken. But the perfect example of conduct in cases of the sort we possess again in the Lord. A chief feature of the history of the passion is formed by His entire isolation during His sufferings. Not only is He forsaken by the world and by the great multitude, but also by His friends. And they are not haply called away by death ; no, it is He Himself whose divine glory has died or is dying within them, while they become uncertain during His humiliation in their faith in Him, do not venture to confess Him : one denied, another betrayed Him. And the like, although after an infinitely shortened standard, may befall all His followers ; and certainly this is among the bitterest things in the cup of suffering, not only to stand alone, but also to be given up and denied by those who were our nearest and most intimate friends. But even under such a suffering we are to be prepared and learn to preserve love to men, and to be able to say after His example, " Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me " (John xvi. 32) ; since we owe to Him the certainty that such states of obscurity are not of eternal duration, but that sooner or later a day of resurrection and revelation will dawn.

*Earthly Possession and Poverty.*

§ 153.

Earthly wellbeing by no means depends merely on the relation in which the individual here below stands to the world of personalities, but also on his relation to the world of things. The free personality needs earthly possession and property, a certain sum of outward conditions for earthly subsistence, of means for the satisfaction not only of the natural, but also of the higher spiritual needs—all conditions and means that have their equivalent representation in money,

which thereby likewise represents a great multiplicity of enjoyments. Earthly possession is a good, so far as it furnishes a foundation for a free, independent human existence and development. But no man should seek greater possessions than he can in a moral sense transform into his true *property*, than he can really and fully make his own, than he is in a position to ethicize (ethically to work), that is, to take into the service of the moral will and spirit. To possess money as a dead, unfruitful treasure, or books and pictures, without having sense and understanding for them, is nothing more than to have the rude possession, but not in a spiritual sense to have these things truly as *one's own*. But no one should so possess his property as to hang his heart on it, or let it be fettered thereby. False dependence on earthly possession is shown not only in the form of avarice, which renounces all enjoyments only to collect its treasures on earth and gloat over them; it is also shown not only as luxury and extravagance, which changes possession into enjoyment, without the enjoyment being ordained by the moral problem of life, but even in the sentiment by which the assured and secure existence, as this is conditioned by the possession of means, is held as something indispensable. Just this insurance of our existence, resting upon capital, it is, against which the previously quoted words of the apostle (1 Cor. vii. 29 ff.) are directed. For although that was an unquiet time in a special sense, in which, especially for Christians, nothing was sure, and in which they needed earnest warning against thinking that man could have quiet days here on earth, and dwell in secure comfort; yet at all times the truth holds that "the fashion of this world passeth away," and that we can never say to ourselves, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke xii. 19); but must, on the contrary, ever be prepared for the change of things. A Christian should at all times remain vividly conscious that it may be required of him to follow his Lord also in poverty, in struggling with care for daily support, a struggle under whose consuming pressure this word is, in a very special sense, to be proved, "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matt. iv. 4).

But now if the poor, who are shielded from the temptations of riches, may indeed be called happy, if they also overcome

the temptation of poverty, and in deed and truth are followers of Christ; yet it is a great error to think, with the begging monks, that the following of Christ is tied to external poverty, —a view for which the gospel narrative of the rich young men (Mark x. 17–22) has often been referred to without reason. The unfolding of our moral freedom is tied to no external form of life; for this is just the conception and essence of freedom, to be independent of external forms, and in each of them to be able to pursue its highest ideal. “Let the brother of low (poor) degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low” (Jas. i. 9 f.). When the Lord sent out His disciples, with the command to have “no gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purse, nor scrip for their journey,” —(the begging monks, however, have their pockets or purses with them), —“nor two coats, nor shoes, nor staves” (Matt. x. 9 f.), it is manifest that this must not be understood literally. For had the disciples literally followed this prescription, they would thereby have got into the very opposite of the *world-free* state which the Lord would make manifest to them, and would have been on many occasions involved in painful casuistical questions. Then we find, too, that Paul, in contradiction to the letter of this prescription, had “two coats,” as he made his cloak, left behind in Troas, be sent after him. The meaning of the Lord amounted only to this, that in their apostolic labours they must have the fewest possible needs, and above all, no such needs as might hinder them in the fulfilment of their calling. But as regards the carrying out of this rule, it must be different according to the different circumstances, while under all circumstances it remains sure that needs that hinder us in the fulfilment of the duties of our calling are to be rejected. And as regards the Saviour Himself, “the poor life of Christ” has indeed often enough been spoken about; but there can here be no question of poverty, in the strict sense of the word, as it would also have been opposed to His personal dignity to accept alms in the proper sense. He found His means of subsistence in the common property that was brought together by those that belonged to His nearest circle, and followed Him for the kingdom of God’s sake. And this common property cannot be regarded in the light of alms, but rather as free contribu-



tions from all for the promotion of the cause of God's kingdom. He took part in banquets of eminent Pharisees, which were scarcely consistent with proper poverty and with the acceptance of alms. He allowed Himself to be anointed by Mary in Bethany, and defended this luxury — this attention far surpassing what was necessary—against Judas, who thought the ointment were better to have been sold for the benefit of the poor (whom he thus saw outside *their* circle). That coat which He wore on His way to Golgotha was, according to John's statement, not sewed together of several pieces, but was "without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John xix. 23), which points to a certain state of wealth. On the other hand, one may speak of the poor life of Christ, namely, in a spiritual sense, or in the meaning of the perfectly *world-free* life, so far as He was internally bound to none of the goods of this world, as one who had nothing and possessed nothing, that is, in the worldly sense in which the men of this world possess its goods, while they themselves are taken possession of and ruled by them. When He Himself says, "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20), He thereby designates His life not merely as that of a pilgrim who has no continuing place of abode, but likewise hints that there is no place in this world, no earthly or worldly "where" (*ποῦ*), in short, no single thing here below whereon He leans or whereon He has His support (and so His homelessness on earth); for His support was the Father alone, His place of abode and rest the work of the Father, in which He was engaged early and late, and His Father's house, which is everywhere. And the requirement He makes of His followers is, that they are to be internally independent of every earthly support, that affords us a worldly security, as "their holes afford to the foxes, their nests to the birds," but that, when it is required of them, they are also to be ready to let go such support (compare Tauler, *On Following the Poor Life of Jesus Christ*).

While, then, internal poverty is an absolute requirement addressed to all the followers of Christ, the external contrast between riches or wealth on the one side, and poverty on the other, will at all times be found on earth (John xii. 8), while at all times there will also be those who belong neither to the

rich nor the poor, but whom God "feeds with food convenient for them" (Prov. xxx. 8). That riches and poverty should ever be removed from the world, and community of goods introduced, is a fantastic imagination. For, granted that to-day all have equal property, there will be to-morrow already a great number of people who have spent what they possessed, while others have come into possession of it. Moreover, the great Educator of humanity does not permit Himself, by the communistic chimeras of men, to be robbed of those means that play a great part in the guidance of man's life, and the divine plan of education. With this for the rest it is thoroughly consistent, that to our power—whereof we shall speak more fully afterwards—we are to labour for the solution of the social problem.

That no kind of luxury, that is to say, no kind of use of property that surpasses what is just necessary must be found in a Christian, is an arbitrary contention, and conflicts as well with the example of Christ as with the destination of human life. The justification of luxury lies in this, that life is also destined for enjoyment, so that here the only question is the contents and value of the enjoyment, especially whether one brings the enjoyment, be it one belonging to the lower or the higher order, into the right relation to the total problem of life. It belongs to the requirement of respectability, that to every class, to every position in life, a certain amount of external good things of life corresponds. That the rich man in the gospel was clothed in purple and fine linen, was not in itself blameable. Every one may clothe himself according to his rank, and it were not respectable if a man in high position would clothe himself like a day-labourer. On the other hand, all luxury is unjustifiable as soon as it assumes an egoistic character, and lays itself out for the assertion of the personal ego, or for boundless enjoyment of one kind or another, whereby it becomes blameworthy extravagance.

Besides egoistic extravagance in the stricter sense, there is also a thoughtless extravagance, against which we must take heed, that is, that we use not up our material goods in an entirely *regardless* way, let them be consumed without advantage or true joy, either to ourselves or others. "In the higher classes," says Marlo, "there often occurs a consumption or

enjoyment, arising from that recklessness that is almost always combined with superfluity. He that destroys a sheet of white paper without using it, or lets a candle burn without use to any one, acts immorally, however small the value of the objects so consumed. What the work of a man has made for the use of others, no one must destroy from whim or arrogance; and it is a sign of the greatest corruption of manners to regard such a habit as expressive of a fine mode of life.”<sup>1</sup> How often do we incur the guilt of so thoughtless an extravagance! And to all it is salutary to lay to heart these words from the miracle of the multiplied loaves and fishes in the gospel, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost” (John vi. 12).

*Health and Sickness.*

§ 154.

Earthly wellbeing is not only conditioned by earthly possession and property, but also by the harmony of the bodily organism, which we call health, without which all earthly activity, as also all earthly enjoyment, if not made quite impossible, is at all events very much hindered. “*Mens sana in corpore sano*” is from ancient times the designation of a normal human life. A superficial consideration might make us think that Christianity must spiritualistically despise the body, as *e.g.* Neoplatonism and other tendencies, that regarded corporality as something unworthy of the spirit. On the contrary, the truth is, that precisely the most spiritual of all religions is likewise that which most emphatically vindicates the importance of the body as the organ for the plastic self-representation of the spirit, which is also testified by all plastic art. Christianity makes prominent the importance of corporality, not only by its doctrine of the resurrection of the body, but also by this, that it regards the body in the present life as the temple of the Holy Spirit, as also in Christ the eternal Word became flesh and blood, and dwelt bodily among us and Christ did not arise as pure spirit, but in a glorified body. As it will have our body regarded as the temple of the Holy Spirit, it

<sup>1</sup> Marlo, *System der Weltökonomie*, II. 117.

thereby declares most strongly against every abuse and profanation of the body, against all undermining of the health by immoderation and low passions, and makes it our duty to apply ourselves to the cultivation of the body for a worthy dwelling and a willing instrument of the spirit. A false dependence on our body, and an overestimate of the care for its health, takes place when this is pursued at the cost of the health of our soul, when the body, which is appointed to be the servant of the spirit, becomes its master, and the spirit is degraded to bondage under the body. Thus, in fact, to many men care for the health and bodily welfare becomes something like the essential problem of life, as the numerous frequenters of baths and mineral waters, and the crowds of those traveling about for their health from year to year, sufficiently show. To prevent and to counteract such a bondage, it is of the utmost importance that we strive as much as possible to get the body under our power. In this respect the gymnastic exercises of the old Greeks testify to a right insight. In consequence of the present sinfulness and disturbance of the normal relation, it may very often become necessary for us, with the apostle (1 Cor. ix. 27), to treat our body not so much like a voluntary and obedient servant, as rather like a slave, a contumacious serf, who is ever thinking to emancipate himself, is lurking for the favourable moment to effect a rising, to snatch the mastery to himself and dethrone the spirit, a serf that must be constrained by the strictest discipline. This is the ascetic mode of view (Saint Francis named his body his Brother Asinus, the beast of burden, needing hard treatment); and though this view-point is carried through one-sidedly by asceticism, yet it preserves its validity according to time and circumstances. As against the too anxious care for the health, and the weak yielding to bodily weaknesses, Schleiermacher's rule applies: One dare have no time to be sick. And in every special case it may be commended to earnest consideration how far one dare follow his principle, laid down after Plato's example, that one must only apply for medical help in acute diseases, that quickly run their course, while in chronic diseases, that require many years' treatment and a great sacrifice of time, one must not subject oneself to the physician's treatment, because that might withdraw us for an indefinite, incalculable time,

from the fulfilment of the duties of our calling, and give us over to a fundamentally non-ethical existence, an existence in which care of the health, or rather of the disease, is made our weightiest task; that, therefore, one should rather be content to exist and to work *according to our circumstances*, and as long as possible rest satisfied with *the health of the good will*, as it proceeds from a well-ordered soul.

But although every one who diligently prosecutes the work of his calling may regard it as his task to have as far as possible no time to be sick, yet, on the other hand, the history of the leadings of human life teaches us—what, it is true, Plato and the heathen ethics could not truly recognise—that though men are unwilling, yet the Lord's will often bids that we shall have time for it, since it is He who throws us on the *sick-bed*. But the purpose of time is that we are to ripen for eternity in the course of it, for our heavenly calling, to which the earthly one serves as a mere temporal husk. Therefore it is an error to think that time is only given us for earthly labour and enjoyment, and that all else is but loss of time. Labour and enjoyment both do not suffice for the ripening and growth of the soul. Time is *also* given us for suffering, is also given us to grow weary in it; in short, to feel aright how empty it is in itself, and so to conceive a longing for that which truly and permanently can fill it. It is also given that we may learn in it to wait and tarry in patience. Time is also given us that we may learn to know its slow course on the sick-bed, while without, men are spending the hours in lively activity and fleeting enjoyment, and complaining that the time passes so quickly. But "amid the slow course of time," chained to the sick-bed, we are to get time to consider something that we do not in every-day activity take time to consider, namely, our heavenly calling. Sickness, which at once tears us away from our earthly life of work and enjoyment, and transports us into an existence separated from the world's business, a so to say monastic existence, is to subserve the healing and growth of the soul, that we may ripen in such quiet for eternal life, and prepare for our death: for every sickness is a precursor of death, and in every more serious sickness we are to anticipate the hour of death. Precisely on the sick-bed we become aware that health is only a relative



good, and that one must be able to dispense with it, as with all else besides that belongs to earthly happiness, simply because the destiny of our life is not for this earth. A chronic malady, too, that does not indeed make us unfit to fulfil our earthly calling, but yet either robs us of, or at least embitters, so many an hour of work, so many an hour of recreation, is intended to be "a thorn in the flesh," which is to advance us in the life of our heavenly calling, and to enable us to experience how in our weakness God's strength is mighty and fulfils its work, a salutary counterpoise against the temptations as well of sensuality as of pride. Precisely like external poverty, bodily sickness is also ordained on account of sin, although one must by no means from the sickness of the individual, or from his earthly need, without more ado, conclude his special sinfulness (compare John ix. 3). The chief thing is that we make the right use of our sicknesses, which must be individualized for each person, according to his internal state. The chief thing is that we follow Christ even under this pressure, this humiliation, as He is not only our Saviour, our true physician, but has also left us an example of the true freedom of the spirit, and the hidden communion of love with the Father, even under the severest bodily sufferings. "Let us only think on the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ," Luther used to say, amid his own bodily sufferings, as those of others; "then we may well keep silence and become patient."

When believing Christians make the right use of sicknesses, there is also formed a Christian asceticism, and therewith connected mysticism. As long as there is sickness on earth, it is provided that asceticism and mysticism shall not die out.<sup>1</sup> In the sick one there is formed an asceticism, a continuous exercise of the art voluntarily to bear sufferings and deprivations, such as every sickness brings with it, an exercise in renunciation, in obedience, in patience; in short, an acquaintance with suffering. And along with this there is likewise developed a Christian mysticism, an internal world-hidden communion with God and with the invisible, heavenly world, an internal union with the Lord and mystical love in the intercourse of prayer with Him. But this mystical communion

<sup>1</sup> Windel, *Die pädagogische Bedeutung der Krankheit* (Beiträge aus der Seelsorge für die Seelsorge, 2 Heft, S. 35).

of life and suffering with Christ is no doubt conditioned by the humble self-knowledge, the humble consideration, whether the sickness be a chastisement or a trial. And what a call, what opportunity for self-knowledge is given us in sickness! In sickness we anticipate death. We are stripped of all that is external. Not only riches, rank, condition, honour with men, but partly also our spiritual abilities and talents are then suspended, as it were laid aside like garments, which we must lay off till afterwards, perhaps for ever. The *man himself* comes to light in sickness—and how? As a rule, to our humiliation. But then it is also confirmed that “God giveth grace to the humble” (Jas. iv. 6), that they feel themselves accepted by God as His children, that the inner life is developed to a higher grade of perfection, that in quietness a growth in the peace of the soul occurs, in right understanding of the most simple elementary truths, which now receive the impress of *novelty*, in the knowledge of the one thing needful, the proper purpose of life, which consists not in earthly good fortune, of our heavenly calling, of the love of Christ and the blessings of the cross, especially also of the Scriptures and the Church hymns—a knowledge as against which all theory is so weak and shadowy, a mere figure; for the knowledge that the sufferer gains, rests upon a very wonderful, mysterious *experience*.

### *Life and Death.*

#### § 155.

The condition of all the goods that we can appropriate within the present existence is life. The preservation and prolongation of life must therefore not be desirable to us for its own sake, but for the sake of the spiritual contents of which it is the bearer. Therefore self-defence, when our life is assailed, may become a duty; but for the same reason it may also become a duty to sacrifice our life, when the higher problem of life requires it, as in martyrdom, or where the duties of the calling involve it, as with the warrior, the physician, or the clergyman, or where the individual interest

of love requires that one man endangers his life for another ; for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13 ; compare 1 John iii. 16). False dependence on life expresses itself as fear of death, a fear that can only be thoroughly overcome from the standpoint of Christianity. For even granting that a heathen, with contempt of death, sacrifices his life for duty, yet there moves within him, despite the contempt of death, an unsubdued fear of death, a secret thorn, a secret despair, simply because this earthly life is the only real existence for him, while the future is veiled in darkness. The heathen fear of death and despair often seeks to deaden itself by a theatrical, splendid departure from the stage of this life, as, for instance, in many warriors, while they still, at the moment of death, cling to this life, that they must leave, and grasp at the external honour that strikes the eye, in which they vainly would prolong their life after death. Christian love of life consists in this, that one lives it after its true worth, namely, as a preparation and outer court to the future life. A Christian, therefore, lives his life here below as one who is familiar with thoughts of death, and at every hour is ready for the coming of the Lord ; he lives in the hope and view of the other world.

The Christian view of the worth of this life forms a contrast, as well to the heathen view, which regards the present life as carrying its object in itself, and without connection with the future, as also to the ascetic view, which regards indeed the present life as a preparation for the future, but overlooks at the same time that the former also has itself a *relative* value, a proportionately self-dependent importance, and pessimistically regards all and everything in it as mere vanity. The heathen view often emerges in Christendom again, and that in the contention that the important thing is, to live a healthy and capable life amid these earthly relations, but to let the future life approach when it is time, without occupying oneself with it beforehand, or taking thought about it. The expectation of the future life is thus to be in no way an effective power in the present, but at the most an idea or presumption slumbering, without meaning or effect, in the soul, and of which at the proper time one will find how

much truth it contains or does not contain. In other words, one should lay aside the future existence, and not by thinking over it squander his time, which can be better applied to so many problems meeting us in the present. But against this confusion it must be maintained that it is quite impossible to live the earthly life in spirit and in truth, if it be not beforehand put in the right relation to its final object, not in the right way laid out teleologically (with a view to the end). Where this relation to the final object of the whole existence is wanting, the necessary consequence is a false estimation as well of the goods as also of the evils of life. When, again, one lives his life in Christian communion with God, and therefore also in the communion of the Redeemer, risen again in the midst of His Church, and in the lively hope springing therefrom, then a soul first gets light upon this earthly life, its goods and evils; while, when this light is lacking, one will ever be pursuing shadows, in which one thinks to seek the true essence, or fleeing from them. But when we thus express the requirement that even amidst the present life the future is to be lived, the acknowledgment is in no way excluded thereby that the present life also possesses a relatively self-dependent import and a proportionate value in itself. That this is so appears, indeed, from this, that a definite earthly calling, which we are to fulfil, is committed to us by God. And who could declare the wish illegitimate, that it might be given us to carry on our earthly calling to a certain termination? Yea, to live his earthly life on all sides as fully as possible, is a wish that in itself cannot be called illegitimate. Every single circle of the creation has its peculiar glory, which we wish thoroughly to understand and to assimilate. We only once live on this earth. Only once can we do the earthly day's work, and what is not done under this sun, before the night approaches, remains undone. Only once can we live the life of love here below, amid these bonds of communion by which we are encompassed. And although the life of love in heaven is the perfect life, yet our life on earth has its special glory, its peculiar blessing from the Lord, its peculiar refraction of light from above. Who, for instance, would call that lament of Antigone in Sophocles in itself unwarranted, that she should descend into

the kingdom of shadows without having experienced what nuptial bliss, what maternal joy is? So the wish that is uttered in all men's hearts has its justification, that they might not leave this earth ere they have seen and experienced upon it what was their special desire and longing, be it the execution, the crowning of the labour of their calling, or perhaps the fulfilment of some longing, born of love, as the patriarch Jacob, who had bewailed his son Joseph as dead, on seeing him again, fell on his neck, and said, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (Gen. xlv. 30); or one or other great change in human society, the first morning rays of a new and better time (compare Luke ii. 25-38). And ever anew the lament of those who live longer is heard, that it was not given to the departed generation to live to see this or that. Heathenish and unwarranted is such a lament, such a wish, only when the whole heart is absorbed in it, when we cannot sacrifice our wish to the counsel and will of the Lord.

### § 156.

It also belongs to a whole and full life on earth that one live through all the ages of man, from childhood to old age, that one live through each of the seasons of human life in their special glory. It is a natural, a genuine human wish to become old, to live long on earth. But we dare never forget that this life, despite its relative self-worth, is yet at bottom only a *means* and a previous step for a hereafter, that our last and proper goal is by no means happiness on this earth, but bliss in heaven. From this point of view it must be regarded as a grace to become old, because a longer space of time is thereby granted to us to ripen for eternity. Meanwhile one must beware of attaching to old age hopes of earthly good fortune, so to say, chiliastic hopes of undisturbed rest and happiness, as if such must needs be fulfilled; but chiefly see in old age, and what befalls us during it, the last preparation for the heavenly kingdom. The Christian Church expects indeed in *its* old age a happy, golden time on earth, the millennial reign (Rev. xx.), a time of peace, in a harmonious unity of heavenly and earthly goods, although



that time of peace is again to be banished by the power of death. One might, then, be tempted to ask whether something corresponding may not occur in the life of the individual Christian, whether a Christian, to whom it is given to live a full human life on earth, should not also get his millennial kingdom on this earth, his golden age, that is, a time of peace in old age, "when Satan is bound," when external adversity and enmity have ceased, when the passions in his breast are stilled, when one lives out one's days in peace with God and man, in internal and external harmony, rich in heavenly and earthly blessings. Experience teaches, however, that this comparison between the Church and the individual Christian admits of only being very imperfectly carried out; that although there are individuals to whom it is given, in this sense, in the evening of life to receive their millennial kingdom, yet such are always but rare exceptions. To the most it evidently is not given. And even to those fortunates the thousand years mean but a few days. Then come "Gog and Magog" (Rev. xx. 8), the messengers of death. So then salvation and the heavenly kingdom—and this applies to every single soul—is the only all-important thing. More reliable than the view and prospect mentioned, and in a much higher measure applicable to actual life, is another manner of looking at things, namely, the idea that very often at the end of the earthly life something befalls a Christian, whereby—as it may be designated—the last touch is laid on him,<sup>1</sup> to prepare him for what is in store (a long and sore sickness, loss of goods, on which he all his life set a high value, disregard and misconception, and so on); wherefore we so often hear the customary saying, That, too, I had still to experience! So, then, even in old age and to the last, we need to be *weaned*.

A long life on earth brings us a more manifold experience of the inconstancy of human things, of the illusions of life, teaches us more thoroughly to value the one and permanent, the ever present, the sun that never sets. It is the possession of this one thing which, with all that outwardly differences the one from the other, is inwardly to be the common fruit of life in old age.

<sup>1</sup> Hirscher, *Christliche Moral*, I. 294.

Goethe says: "To live long is to survive very much: beloved, hated, indifferent men, kingdoms, capitals, yea, woods and trees that we when young sowed and planted. We survive ourselves, and quite thankfully acknowledge if only some of the gifts of body and spirit still are left to us. We rest content with all this that is passing away, if only the eternal remains every moment present to us, we suffer not from perishing time."<sup>1</sup> We can appropriate this utterance to ourselves, if we, instead of the cold and indefinite "eternal," place the kingdom of God, in the Christian meaning of the word. It is this that at every stage of life should be present to us, and which then gives us the victory over decay. It is this for which we are ripening, whither we are growing, often amid oppressions and deprivations of many a kind; it is this on account of which we grow old on earth.

### § 157.

Although it may be regarded as a great blessing to attain a great age, yet the Lord's own example shows us that the worth of life does not depend on the length of it, and that in a life of short duration an infinite fulness of life may be compressed. And although it is further a great blessing to leave behind a full and rich earthly life, yet a life that is poor in earthly and temporal experiences may still contain the highest riches, "the better part," if a man—be he as old as Simeon, or called away in his youth—can say at the close of his life, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." That is, at the exit from this life, the all-important thing is, what treasure we have gained in this life, that we can take over with us into that kingdom. For in that kingdom all are stripped of all strange ornament, and each one is only himself, and only brings that with him which in the most proper and inmost sense is his own. But our proper self and our inalienable treasure are not our earthly experiences as such; for how many experiences, with their joys and pains, may pass through a human heart, without the heart itself being thereby really transformed and changed, because but

<sup>1</sup> Goethe, *Briefe an die Gräfin Auguste zu Stolberg, verwitwete Gräfin von Bernstorff*, S. 185.

a varied succession of moods passed through the heart, without any of them yielding a fruit! Very many can write long "Life-reminiscences," rich in outward experiences, without having the least to communicate of a sacred history of their own heart. Nor is our true self and our inalienable treasure, genius and talent, nor yet our knowledge. Knowledge and fancy are ever but something external, and behind them lurks the kernel of our being, as indeed much of our knowledge may also in time be lost. The kernel of our being is the will, and the treasure in question in that kingdom is the contents of the will, which in the course of the present life we have appropriated and wrought out. Thus, when we quit this life, all depends on the answer to this question, On what hast thou set thy will? If thou hast set thy will on God's kingdom, thou now attainest thy home, in which the hidden treasure of thy heart shall become manifest. But if thou hast set thy will on this world, on the earthly, thou comest into an order of things in which thou wilt feel thyself strange, and thy will must be in an internal desert, hungering and thirsting after the earthly things in which it here sought its food. And if thy knowledge and acquirement were even that of a genius such as Bacon of Verulam, but at the same time thy will worldly, thou wilt only feel the more deeply the sharp contradiction between thy knowledge and thyself. The chief thing, then, remains not to die till our will be dead to this world, dead to the requirement of earthly happiness, so that it is placed under the obedience of Christ, "Not my will, but Thine be done!" not to die till our will be firmly naturalized in the kingdom that cannot be moved. And therefore the chief requirement that life makes of us is to use the time of this life as a time of grace. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth; but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. vi. 19).

### § 158.

A peculiar manifestation of false dependence on life, as seen especially in many old people, is that one will by no means quit life, not simply because he loves it and has pleasure in it, but only because he will not break with the

power of *habit*. We certainly cannot find it in itself illegitimate when Goethe's Egmont, in the strength of his manhood, laments that he is to part from "the friendly habit" of existence and of working, a word that he utters in fresh and fiery love to life, in his joy in the fulness of earthly existence, still inspired by a great idea which he now has to leave behind unfulfilled. But this sweet habit of existence often becomes all-predominant in old people, and often, too, void of every higher idea. They, as it were, grow ever more together with this earth, as also the care for their worthy person, namely, their bodily earthly person, becomes the point of view to which all is subordinated; they grow together with their external surroundings, their household goods and furniture. And as they in their continued uniform course have struck deep, far-reaching roots in this earthly soil on which they stand, they can often protract their life in a well-nigh dreadful way. Every change, every removal is hateful to them, and they have a horror of death, that great total change.

### § 159.

False dependence on life has its counterpart in *weariness of life* and dislike of life (*taedium vitae*), which springs from various, partly physical, partly moral causes. In the Middle Ages this weariness of life was designated as *acedia* (*ἀκηδεια*), a state of soul that often occurred in monasteries, that is, in such as gave themselves to a one-sidedly contemplative life, without having the power or the calling for it, and who were filled with a disgust of all things, even of existence, while even the highest religious thoughts became empty and meaningless to them. "Akedia" originally means freedom from care, but afterwards received an entirely different meaning. Akin, namely, to freedom from care is carelessness and negligent indifference; and thus Akedia denotes a state in which all has become indifferent to a man, nothing can interest him more, all feelings are blunted and extinguished, all ideas, even the highest, have become inefficacious. Akedia is thus carelessness in the sense of entire lack of interest, *weariness* in the highest degree, which can only make itself felt as a most unhappy state, since man is made to have

interests, and an empty existence becomes the most oppressive of all burdens. It is a special form of hypochondria; and although the name belongs to the Middle Ages, yet the thing occurs even in our day, and is known to many as a passing mood. Who has never felt something of what the Danish poet describes in these words?—

“The deeds that I myself once praised,  
 What from of old was done by Thee,  
 What Thou, O God, to me hast shown,  
 To-day I scarcely can it see!  
 I see men only like the trees  
 Pass in array before my eye;  
 The labours of Thy hand like dreams  
 In cloudy distance from me fly.”

But Akedia, like all hypochondria, which we can designate in general as a disharmony of the spiritual and bodily organism, we must regard as something non-ethical, something sinful that is to be fought against. Although hypochondria is a dislike of life, yet it may likewise be referred to a false dependence on or attachment to life, in so far as the hypochondriac, in perverted fashion clinging to his own ego, and as it were ensnared in himself, holds fast his unsatisfied claim on life. Akedia must—apart from dietetic means, which in many cases are to be applied—be fought, above all things, by regular work, in which the individual can forget himself, as also by living together with men, by intercourse with nature, in which last respect Goethe so aptly says that the pleasure we find in life depends on the regular return to external things, on the alternation of day and night, the change of the seasons, of blossom and fruit; that the equipoise in our own existence depends on living together with this quiet regularity of nature, on our surrender to it. The fact that that weariness of life chiefly appeared in monasteries serves as a warning against a one-sidedly contemplative and introverted life-tendency, as the same also reminds us that this earthly life is not appointed for exclusive occupation with religion, the one thing, but for the union of the One and the manifold, of the heavenly and the earthly, and that the heavenly loses its power for us if we arbitrarily set aside the earthly calling. But while weariness and disgust of life mainly spring from an unfruitfully contemplative tendency, and a leisurely occupation with the



one thing, yet it may also proceed from the contrary, and that in the form of becoming *blasé*, of spiritual withering, namely, from living and moving exclusively in multiplicity, in an excess of enjoyments, as is the case with many people of the world, to whom religion alone, that is, the return to the One, would bring healing.

When weariness of life and the feeling of the intolerableness of life has culminated, it may lead, as experience teaches, to *suicide*. Suicide may be caused either by predominant hypochondria, even without a special occasion; or by a man falling into despair on account of his passions, that he has vainly sought to fight against, so that his very existence becomes an intolerable burden to him; or by despair on account of misdeeds done (Judas Iscariot); or by hopeless love; or by any other great adversity, *e.g.*, the loss of honour, fortune, and so on. The suicide, too, is at bottom affected by a false dependence on life; for although he will cast life from him as an oppressive burden, he at the same time retains an unsatisfied claim on earthly happiness, which he will by no means sacrifice. He will not suffer, will not bear and want, will not attain in this way to true redemption. The great sin committed in suicide consists in this, that the man at once tears himself loose from all his duties, especially from obedience to God, who has placed him in this order of things, in which he should fulfil the will of God not only by acting, but also bearing and expiating; in this, that he by his own power bursts open the gate of death, and presses uncalled into the world beyond. Only on the Christian standpoint, only when the truths of Christianity, that there is a living God, a kingdom of God, a future life, are presupposed as true and certain, can suicide be recognised as deserving condemnation. Wherever these presuppositions are wanting, no ground whatever is found for declaring suicide absolutely to be rejected. It has been well said, from the standpoint of heathen ethics, that man has duties to other men, to the community to which he belongs, to the fatherland, and dare not therefore withdraw himself from the fulfilment of these duties by quitting the body. But when a man is now unfit to work, and can only further suffer, is only, as it is then said, a burden to himself and others, why shall he not quit the

scene? supposing, namely, that there is no kingdom of God into which we are to enter through many tribulations, and there is no world beyond for which he also by the will of God is to grow ripe in patient endurance. If this life is all, and an enormous suffering, be it in body or soul, the last of it, and thereafter nothing whatever—why, then, should the man not be free, without any one being entitled to complain, to shorten at his own pleasure the last act of the tragedy? Hamlet has entirely hit the right mark when he says:

“O that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!”

And in his famous monologue:

“To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,

When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will.”

—SHAKESPEARE'S *Hamlet*, III. 1.

As these presuppositions were wanting in heathenism, or else only existed most imperfectly, as especially in the period of the decay of the Roman Empire belief in immortality had vanished from the multitude, all moral and religious consciousness was undermined, suicide must also have appeared a thing allowable. In painful diseases it was very customary in old Rome to take one's own life, for which many even sought and obtained special permission from the state. The Stoics advanced the doctrine, that when life became burdensome to one, it might be viewed as a room which one leaves because it is filled with suffocating smoke; but likewise urged the rule that it must be done with respect and dignity. The philosophic Emperor Marcus Aurelius gave the counsel to quit life voluntarily, if one could not maintain oneself at a certain moral elevation. One may speak of a suicide

noble from a heathen standpoint in Cato, who quitted the body because he would not survive the Republic. For as heathenism knows no kingdom of God embracing present and future, and not subject to change like the kingdoms of the world, as the earthly fatherland was to heathen the highest among all social goods, it is explicable that a high-minded Roman, who saw the destruction of the fatherland before his eyes, would exist no longer. The matter is different on the standpoint of Christianity. Here it becomes our problem, if it be God's will, to survive all our earthly goods and hopes, and patiently to suffer, if one had to suffer like Job. It is just this suffering and patience for which the suicide finds no courage, wherefore in his folly he flees from one evil, to meet another far greater still. If suicide has become so frequent in our days, the reason for this is that unbelief, forgetfulness of God, has become so frequent, and that in the midst of Christendom so many live on with a heathen way of thinking. In what measure the earnestness of Christianity is thrust back is shown by this, that quite usually suicide is judged as a deed of irresponsible madness, without considering all the preceding sins, for which the man certainly was responsible; as it is shown also in the moral laxity which population and state manifest in the burial of suicides.

A casuistic question has often been brought up within the Church, whether it is permitted to a Christian to escape by suicide from a sinful temptation? During the Diocletian persecution cases occurred in which Christian women, to escape unchaste deeds of violence, destroyed themselves. Some of them were even admitted into the number of the saints, and Chrysostom praised their virtue. Augustine, again, with reason, disallowed their course of conduct, as chastity does not dwell in the body, but in the heart, and the heart could be preserved pure even when the body had to suffer indignity.<sup>1</sup>

### § 160.

A morbid longing for death may also occur where there can be no question of weariness of life in the sense above

<sup>1</sup> Compare, however, Rothe's remarks in the opposite sense, *Christl. Ethik*, III. 201 ff.

discussed. In a one-sided, sentimental colour we meet it in many souls which in a certain respect may be called beautiful souls, but which shun work in coarse earthly matter, and contact with the difficulties and adversities of this life. Also they, from whom the groan may often be heard, Were I but once dead! suffer from a false dependence on life, which is just expressed in this, that they will not work and suffer in patience. On the other hand, there is also a genuine longing for death, which it behoves us ethically to cultivate, and which, united with a powerful life, and working in the problems of this earthly existence, is in its proper kernel and essence a longing for the perfection that is simply never to be found in this life, a consciousness of the imperfection, fragmentariness, and perishableness in our present existence. There are moods which we do not reckon among the morbidly sentimental, in which a Christian feels disposed to say with Claudius:

“ For truly it is not worth the pains,  
A long time here to be.”

What is herein expressed is the longing for the ideal, the perfect, and the feeling of all that vanity under which spirit and mind are consumed; and such longing is the truer the more one has become ripe within for the heavenly kingdom, the more he, in a moral-religious sense, is at least approximately done with the life of earth. Yet such moods must be modified by surrender to the will of the Lord. So we find it in the apostle, who says, “ I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you ” (Phil. i. 23 f.). Personally he is done with life on this earth; but for the sake of the Church he must still remain, according to the will of the Lord. Here longing for death and willingness to live coincide and become one. When the same apostle declares, “ To die is gain ” (Phil. i. 21), only those can say it after him who have become fit and ripe for that kingdom. Even the nobler heathen, who under the influence of a deeper philosophy, or also of the mysteries, looked forward to a life beyond, had a consciousness or a presentiment that death must be a gain, in that they, as *e.g.* Plato, dying the longer the more to the lower senses, had lived their life in the world of ideas.

That death is a gain Socrates also seems to hint in his dying hour, in that he gave orders to sacrifice a cock to Æsculapius, the god of the healing art; for by this he seemed to hint that the hour of death would be to him an hour of liberation and of recovery, as after enduring a severe sickness. If we look at the many illusions and dreams of this life, at the fever-fancies of the many passions, at all the pressure, all the burdens of this state, it may no doubt be viewed even as a condition of sickness, from which we would fain be healed. And after the Platonic view, the life of the wise man is a continued process of healing, in which death denotes the last crisis. But that death as the last crisis is a gain can only be declared in the full and right meaning of the word by a Christian. Only for the ripened soul of a Christian does it fully hold, what that verse of an old mystic declares :

“ If death is terrible, yet I imagine  
That nothing is more bless'd than *to be dead.*”

But *in truth* to have endured death, to have *rightly* passed through it, means, however, that one has endured it in faith, has died in Christ. In itself death has indeed its terror, and that proceeds from this, that death is the wages of sin; and although it has lost its sting, and there is no more condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 1), yet bodily death remains the last form under which the Christian is to die to this world and sacrifice his own will, his natural self-love to the will of God. To endure and “overcome” death, means to *will* to die after the will of the Lord, and to die in justifying faith, in full confidence in the saving grace of God in Christ.

As the hour of death is so uncertain, we must make sure that the hour when it strikes do not find us unprepared. We can also here apply that word, “ Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning” (Mark xiii. 35). It has often been asked whether it were desirable to die with or without consciousness? We must indeed commit it entirely to the will of God concerning us, what form our departure is to take at last. But the example of Christ shows us what is the perfection, namely, to die with



full consciousness, in love to take farewell of men, and to commit our spirit into the hands of the Father. It has also been always regarded in Christendom as a great grace when it was granted to a Christian, united with his nearest ones, to enjoy the Lord's Supper in the hour of death, to be thereby renewed in the grace of the Lord and Saviour, to whom he is now to go, and at the same time to confirm his communion of love with the survivors. Yet as to some the grace is given to have a peaceful, cheerful departure, as if irradiated with glory, and to leave their friends the memory of an *edifying* end, there are others again, and among them such as one may associate with the saints of God, to whom death proves in no way easy, but difficult, for whom dying, with its terrors and anguish, takes the form of a last trial and a last temptation, and who in their last hour need prayer, and earnestly cry, "Lead us not into temptation." This we should consider, and therefore exercise this principle, this resolution of faith, amid all changes of life and of fate to hold fast to the word of God; yea, simply to hold fast only to the in itself true and faithful *word*, whose truth and reliability, whose blessing and grace is thoroughly independent of our feeling and perception. To many, too, a swift and unexpected death is allotted. Therefore we must at all times preserve faith in the heart. Have but faith in the heart,—we say with Luther,—then thou wilt be saved, even shouldst thou fall down the stair and find a sudden death.

*Christian Contentment and Joy in Life.*

§ 161.

From the hitherto unfolded conduct in regard to temporal goods and evils proceeds Christian contentment and joy in life. The heathen wisdom requires that the wise man be sufficient to himself, maintain under all circumstances an immoveable *autarkia* (self-sufficiency), and so carry the source of contentment within himself. The contentment of a Christian, on the other hand, consists in this, that amid all change of things, God and God's kingdom is enough for him; and that he can

only satisfy himself so far as his life is rooted in God and His kingdom. The Christian art of happiness, or, as we prefer to designate the matter, the Christian direction to true and abiding joy in life, we can comprehend in the following sayings: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. vi. 33); "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9); and "Be ye thankful" (Col. iii. 15; 1 Thess. v. 18).

The first rule—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God"—embraces in it not only the requirement of love to God and man, but likewise also designates the life-maxim, without which we become involved in an internal contradiction, that makes all repose of mind impossible. The second rule—"My grace is sufficient for thee"—makes us conscious that as we can be satisfied with nothing else but the highest, so that highest shall also really satisfy us. If we now apply this principle—to be satisfied with the grace of God—to actual life and its manifold states, it says that every one shall be satisfied with his own calling and his own position, and find his joy therein; that we are not to seek our joy in the extraordinary and remote, but in what lies near us; that we, as it is said in Sibbern's excellent *Gabrieli's Letters*, are to hold to and refresh ourselves with what we can have everywhere, with human life, with the life of nature round about us, for "there is wonderful life's music enough; one need only become still and hearken." And then, to be satisfied with the grace of God means also that we exercise ourselves in resignation, familiarize ourselves with the consciousness that perfect happiness in the present existence, where virtue ever remains so imperfect, is simply impossible, and the perfect good we only possess in hope. But amid all resignation we are to learn an unbounded *thankfulness* for the unspeakably many and manifold things that God has given and gives us, "and all from mere fatherly goodness and mercy, without any merit and worthiness of ours." Sorrow, care, and discontent with life have very often their foundation in unthankfulness, in a state of mind that will only make claims, but not give thanks. Thankfulness, again, is a quietly flowing fountain of joy, yea, a guardian and helping angel. Many men would have been preserved from the abyss of melancholy into which they sunk,

could they only have taken heart to thank God. The Fathers of the Church, as well as Luther, often urge it with special emphasis, that a dejection and sorrow entirely absorbing a man is at bottom nothing but ungodliness, and proceeds from the devil, for it arises from unbelief in the gospel of Christ, and from unthankfulness for the grace of God revealed in Christ.

The true and essential joy is joy in the Lord (Ps. v. 12 ; Phil. iv. 4). We distinguish between *peace* and *joy* in the communion of our God and Saviour. For peace is the inward testimony to this, that reconciliation with God is accomplished within us, that we have been reconciled with God, by faith have found salvation and grace with Him. Joy, again, denotes not only that the opposition is removed, the internal contradiction solved, but also that we are living and moving in the new, blessed fulness of life. A man may have peace with God without likewise rejoicing in God. Both Fenelon and Mynster speak of a "bitter peace," a peace with which a deep, unsatisfied longing, or else a painful remembrance is united. "I have peace, but glad I am not!" said that La Valière, who from a stormy, restless, worldly life, had at last fled to the cloister, when she was asked how she now felt. When, again, joy in God pervades the mind, it feels raised above all sadness and sorrow; then the man has the real feeling, not only of his reconciliation with God, but of his *life* in God, yea, of the free, unhindered outflow and extension of this life, a feeling which may also, no doubt, be expressed in tears, because such joy melts and dissolves so much in man that was hitherto dry and hardened within him. To all who complain that they cannot attain to joy, we cry again and again, Plunge yourselves but more deeply into the peace of God, only learn to thank more heartily, only fill your soul yet more with admiring adoration of the love and glory of God, and you will become joyful (compare General Part, page 363 f.).

In speaking of Christian joy of life, Luther's image comes again before our eye. However numerous and severe the temptations might be by which he was assailed, yet "joy in the Lord remained his strength" (Neh. viii. 10) and the keynote of his life, at all times breaking through and victorious. And this inmost joyfulness was spread out on all sides over his earthly existence. Amid his world-historical labours and

struggles, he could joke and play in the domestic circle with his children ; and when we see him surrounded by his friends at a joyful feast, we are vividly reminded of that old saying, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart ; for God now accepteth thy works" (Eccles. ix. 7). This freshness and health of spirit, this undiminished, full human existence, came also to light in his love for the fine arts, especially for music, in which he believed he perceived an anticipation, a prelude of the delight of the future life ; in fine, in his genuinely childlike love of nature. Not only the view of the starry heaven could inspire and elevate him, but also in his garden he had a heartfelt joy in observing a beautiful apple tree, or a rose that he moved in his hand, or a bird diligently building its nest. True, we dare not forget that he was wont on such occasions to add that all that would have been far fairer still had not sin come in between ; and that joy in the earthly, the praises of which, praises thoroughly legitimate, are so often met with in him, must have also appeared to him as a component part of what is appointed to fade, to wither, and to fall off. Towards the end of his life, he one day said, "The sun has too long shone upon me ; I am weary of the world, and the world is weary of me ; I am like a guest that is quitting the inn." But joy in the Lord is the sun that breaks through all clouds. If we again direct our glance to Calvin, we meet the earnestness of Christianity in a higher degree than its joy, and especially we do not get the impression that the joy in the Lord which animated his heart also glorified the earthly to him as to Luther. The remarkable circumstance has rightly received prominence, that although Calvin repeatedly made greater journeys, although he had found his dwelling in the most beautiful and splendid environment on the Lake of Geneva, in the neighbourhood of the Alps, yet not a single passage is found in his many letters in which the beauties of nature are even mentioned. It is as if nature for him were not there at all.

## STAGES AND STATES OF HOLINESS.

*The Christian Development of Character.*

## § 162.

In holiness there are not only stronger or weaker degrees, but also different *stages*, that is, qualitative differences in the development of life, which yet do not admit of being defined by abstract conceptions. When discussing the stages of holiness, men have from of old distinguished between beginners, the progressive, and the perfect (*incipientes, proficientes, perfecti*). This distinction is, however, only relative and changing. Especially the term perfect (*οἱ τέλειοι*), no doubt a biblical term (Matt. xix. 21; 1 Cor. ii. 6; Heb. vi. 1), can only be understood relatively; for an absolute perfection is not reached on this earth, and the Apostle Paul, who yet certainly belonged to the number of the perfect, says of himself in his later life, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (Phil. iii. 12). But the advancing also, in opposition to the beginners, can only be understood relatively; for one may have advanced in one respect, while in another among the beginners. Nevertheless, the division given has its value, inasmuch as all life, and so too the Christian, incontestably has a beginning, a progress, and a completion. Only, in the application, let us not forget the relativeness and moveableness of the conceptions.

The important thing here is, above all to have the right standard for progress. This standard we have in the relation which the freedom of man's will occupies to the law of God. With beginners in the Christian life, freedom, or moral volition, is reconciled with the law, that is, freedom and grace are found in them in immediate unity, in that they have obtained justification by faith, and now as God's children feel themselves redeemed from the bondage of the law. In the enthusiasm of first love, and in the joy at paradise regained, the opposition between duty and love is done away for them. The burden of Christ appears to be light to them, while they do not yet know from experience, that in order to be able to



appropriate that word in its *full meaning*, serious trials must first be undergone, in which His burden may *appear* heavy enough to us, while it shall yet become manifest that if we only receive it in the right way, that burden will soon become light. They grow and increase in all quietness, but can only be reckoned among the more advanced, in the stricter sense, when they too are led into the trials of life, and endure in them. Under these trials it becomes evident that their moral volition and action has not yet nearly become conformed to the divine will, that the old opposition between duty and inclination, between could and should, is not yet overcome, and that the main thing is to *fight*. Those who are really making progress are thus the fighters. But the progress is shown in the increasing dominion of the spirit over the flesh, in that it becomes easier to us to overcome ourselves, also to gain the victory over besetting sins, even over the special weaknesses belonging to our peculiar disposition. And not only is it shown in mortifying the flesh, but also in a more powerful unfolding of the spirit, a greater fruitfulness, as well in the exercise of the duties of our proper calling, as in the fulfilment of all the duties of truth, righteousness, and love, to which we are bound in daily intercourse with men. Progress, however, not only makes itself felt in the practical direction, but in the contemplative and mystical as well. It is a mark of progress that we do not in our Christian knowledge remain standing at the first elements, but "go on unto perfection," that is, raise ourselves and make progress (Heb. vi. 1), so that "we may comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii. 18 f.), so that we are in a position to "try the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John iv. 1), and no longer allow ourselves, what so easily happens to unestablished minds, "to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," but amid the struggles of the present time also, stand firm and unmovable, faithful to the truth, and upright in love (Eph. iv. 14 f.). And further, progress is recognisable in this, that we learn ever better to strive and continue in prayer. Prayer is in any case the fundamental condition of all progress.

The more we progress, the weaker and more unreliable we

feel within ourselves, because we find how little we can do with our own power, but feel likewise an increased courage, a greater confidence of victory, because Another and Greater makes us strong (Eph. vi. 10 ; Phil. iv. 13). The ordinary criterion by which we become aware that we are making progress, is quiet peace and glad courage for living. For the dominion of the spirit over the flesh and worldly motions makes the soul light and free, whereas the dominion of the flesh and worldliness, combined with an arrest or retrogression in the development, brings with it a troubled and depressed frame of mind.

The perfect, in the strictest sense of the word, would be those in whom freedom and grace were in quite unbroken harmony, and the will of God was no more in any respect an unfulfilled requirement, and who without any hesitation could say, "Now I live not, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). To this stage, however, no one attains in this life, except approximately. Even if there are those who in a definite direction attain to perfection and mastery, *e.g.* in respect to certain temptations, against which they no longer need to struggle, yet there still remain imperfections even in them in other directions.

### § 163.

We have above designated the relation in which our moral volition (our freedom) stands to the divine law, as the measure of our internal progress. It is essentially the same when we say, the measure of our progress is the relation of our freedom to happiness. Beginners are to be compared to the disciples before they entered with the Lord into the passion. They, too, still desire an earthly Messiah's kingdom, such a kingdom of salvation as shall likewise be a kingdom of happiness. For although we have long *learned* that in this point the first disciples went astray, because they had not yet grasped the meaning of the cross and suffering, yet we do not apply this our better insight for our benefit, but continue for our own part to hope for an earthly Messiah's kingdom. And even though we seek our comfort in the cross of Christ, yet we cherish at the same time a great dread of the cross in our own life, and always retain a natural inclination to flee the

cross. An inclination of this kind is found by nature in us all, and the choice is given us whether we, in following Christ, will take to flight, or go forward in His footsteps and make progress. But the Lord calls us to progress each time He is pleased to lead us into the history of the passion, in which salvation and happiness separate from each other; in which we have to endure a struggle with ourselves before we, in willing obedience, can take the cross upon our shoulders. And that an actual progress on the path of suffering is made on our part is shown by this, that it becomes easier to us to bear, to renounce, to want,—is shown by this, that we assume, as regards temporal goods and evils, a greater indifference, understanding this word in its religious and sacred meaning, that we learn, without special effort, “to have them as though we had them not.” For this by no means applies merely to temporal goods, but also to the evils of this life, to our sufferings, which we are to regard and bear as though we bore them not, since we know that they also are transient and have an end, that all our trouble is temporal (of short duration) and easy (2 Cor. iv. 17). Progress is shown in a greater intimacy with the heavenly world, in which we more live our life, in a hope, increasing from day to day, of the future kingdom, the powers of which we already trace within us. The perfection to be striven for we can also here again designate as the proportionately greatest approximation to such a disposition of mind, in which our hope of future glory is steadfast and alike powerful under all troubles, combined as well with an interest for the affairs of the present life as with the higher earnestness that dies to what is temporal. Rothe says, “A great step is taken when one has come to this, to regard his wishes, even the dearest, as nothing, and has in all quietness laid them in the grave.”<sup>1</sup> True, it holds of many of our wishes, that we must absolutely, and in all quietness, bear them to the grave. But it is so much the more needful that over the grave of our wishes hope be planted.

#### § 164.

As one may speak of stages of holiness, so, too, of *states* of holiness, of standing, if also only temporarily standing forms

<sup>1</sup> R. Rothe, *Stille Stunden*, S. 200.

of the relation between the different factors of life. Although the union of grace and freedom is in principle given in regeneration, yet it must be gradually developed under a continued mutual working of grace and freedom. In the Christian life there are two states to be distinguished: on the one hand, one where under the expressions of the life of moral freedom, the blessing of the divine grace is perceptibly revealed; on the other hand, one where grace, as it were, retires and remains hidden, where the freedom of the Christian's will, where the individual in a relative sense is left to himself; states whose deeper final object is that the man in them may be trained to humility, in order that he may reach out after grace, that he may become deeper and more firmly grounded in it.<sup>1</sup> This change of states, which is inseparable from life in this temporal condition, is known to every Christian from his own life. He will also have experienced that when grace is hidden, and it would seem to us that we are left to ourselves, sin soon asserts its power, along with the curse of guilt, and that we are thereby summoned to a renewed struggle, in order more deeply and fully to lay hold of grace.

Consequently two states may be distinguished in our inner life: of refreshment on the one hand, on the other of inward drought and abandonment; on the one hand of peace, on the other of temptation; on the one hand of elevation, of joy, on the other hand of obscurity and oppression, of unrest and anxiety.

We must familiarize ourselves with the thought that we are here in the land of changes, and that only under a constant succession of light and darkness, of fulness and want, of sorrow and joy, which both pass over this earth together, can we ripen for the joy that does not cease. In hours of elevation we should prepare ourselves for trials and struggles; in hours of the fulness of blessing, for lack and want, and should not think, like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, that we can build tabernacles on such a height. And, conversely, we should in times of trial remember those blessed hours in which God gave us a pledge of His grace, and expect their return. We should ever consider, as Thomas à Kempis says, that when God's grace comes to man, it makes him strong for

<sup>1</sup> The Author's *Dogmatics*, § 205.

everything, but when it departs from him he becomes weak and poor again as before, and nothing is then left to him but the deep feeling of his misery. Yet that must not deprive him of courage, much less drive him to despair. Rather in a patient spirit he is to prepare himself for all that the will of God may appoint for him, and bear all that befalls him, for the glory of Jesus Christ. For upon winter follows spring; and when night is gone, the light, cheerful day returns; and after stormy weather a clear sky ("Of intimate intercourse with Jesus"). But amid all the change of things we should hold to God's word, whose truth and grace is independent of our changing moods and feelings; should remain confident that even in states of deepest abandonment God the Lord is with us, although with veiled face, so to say, in strictest incognito, to lead us through the darkness to the light (*per crucem ad lucem*).

By the contrast between states of peace and of temptation, we mean first the so-called temptations in a stricter sense, namely, those which assail the faith, and of these we have already spoken. But there are also temptations in a wider sense, which threaten the work of sanctification, yea, the Christian life itself. True, it may be said of every temptation that our sanctification is threatened by it, but there are states of temptation and of sinfulness in which the work of sanctification is not merely partially disturbed, but in the whole organism of body and spirit a *disharmony* arises, in which the powers of the new life have, as it were, departed from us, and it has the appearance as if the old man, combined with all manner of demoniac powers, would reconquer his dominion. There is a state of the soul when it is all peace and harmony, when God's Spirit, and all good spirits, rule in us, when we love God and men. But, again, there is also a state of soul when egoism, with all that our nature contains of sinful and demoniac, without ourselves being able to explain how, with all its unrest, arises within us, a state of bitterness, fretfulness, and ill-humour; of an unfriendly, excitable, passionate mood, when evil spirits find entrance to us to make the soul bad, ugly, and contrary; a state in which, in a certain measure, the legend of the fair Melusine is reflected. This fabulous Countess of Lusignan, who was not only fair, but kind and



mild, took from her spouse a solemn oath to leave her in her chamber one day of the week unwatched, and not to see her. But he, unable to control his curiosity, at last broke open the door on the fatal day, and beheld the fair Melusine changed into a dragon-like monster. So there may also be certain states within us, recurring almost periodically, in which a similar transformation occurs, or at least is about to occur, if we do not earnestly ward it off; states in which we, as it were, wear a dragon's skin, or appear in another unamiable, ugly form, or at least are in danger of passing into such. In such states one does well, like the fair Melusine, to shut oneself up, and be seen by no one, till the evil hour is past, and the good spirits again have gained the victory. Such evil paroxysms are not overcome but by prayer and fasting (Matt. xvii. 21),—for the body has also its part therein,—as well as by patiently persevering labour and conflict.

The legend of the fair Melusine has been also applied to the marriage relations (so the Norwegian poet Welhaven, in his poem, *Changed Love*). But it finds a more comprehensive application to the soul of man in general, namely, to its internal mongrel frame, and its twofold, entirely opposite states. That it chiefly presents a picture of the natural man is not to be denied; but it certainly admits also of application to the regenerate, in whom the dominion of the old man is broken indeed, but still, as experience teaches by numerous examples, may even yet break forth in violent reaction. We can set beside this what the parson says in Gabrieli's *Letters* ("To and from home"): "One has evil hours, hours of bad humour, of excitability, of fretfulness, of bad manners. The most fatal demons lodge in our soul, or at least would lodge in it. One must know this, that is the main point. Sometimes I have said to them, Depart from me! *apagítote!* and they departed. But at other times they did not. One must then see that he surmounts such hours."

In practical life one can distinguish between states and moods of active zeal, which, so far as the zeal is of the right kind, are combined with clearness of spirit, watchful thought, and prudence, and states of weariness, when we are lax, weak, and weary, when we need the exhortation again to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make

straight paths for your feet" (Heb. xii. 12 f.). The state of spiritual languor, if no powerful opposition be made against it, passes into that of lukewarmness, "when we are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. iii. 15),—a state in which it may always be assumed that the deeper needs of spirit and heart have been thrust aside, if they are not on the point of entire extinction. In this state a false self-satisfaction arises, a false contentment with what one has become, so that an advance does not seem requisite. To such self-satisfaction those may especially be tempted who have already made real and remarkable progress, and now rest, so to say, on their laurels. When it has come to this with a man, the Saviour stands at the door and knocks, but in very many cases His voice is not heard—"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"—when we urgently need to anoint our eyes with eye-salve, that we may see (Rev. iii. 16–20). Akin to this state of languor and lukewarmness is spiritual slumber, and the state of drowsiness, when we go on in a dream-like state of stupefaction, when the lamp of the spirit is extinguished, as with those five foolish virgins in the parable (Matt. xxv. 1 ff.). And such a state of slumber very easily passes over into the state of spiritual death, which, however, can only be a seeming death, when that word is addressed to our soul, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. iii. 1). These states of sleep and of death often occur in men whose Christianity has sunk down to an outward Christianity of habit, where one has the forms of Christianity, but without oil. These are all dangerous states, against which we must watch and pray. No Christian life may fully escape them, and only grace can again awaken us and bring us back into the state of lively and joyful zeal.

Akin to this contrast is the contrast between the state of good works and the state of temptation.<sup>1</sup> By the state of good works we understand a mood and constitution of the soul, in which we practise good in freely flowing productivity, labour in our calling as those that do the work of our heavenly Father, penetrated by the consciousness that is mirrored in these words, "Must I not be about my Father's business?"

<sup>1</sup> Schmid, *Christliche Sittenlehre*, S. 575.

(Luke ii. 49); when labour comes easy to us, while we remain on the path that the Father has assigned us, and will be nothing else than simply what we should be according to God's will and guidance. By the state of temptation, again, we understand one in which not only outward and inward hindrances or restrictions are opposed to our work, whereby we are tempted to become heartless and despondent, but the world also entices and allures us by its pleasure. How many a noble artist, how many an active craftsman, is torn away from the state and the order of good works by temptations that allure him to unworthy dissipations or sinful enjoyments, when, if he would return to the practice of good works, and into the right order, it is not done without earnest conflicts! But how often are they temptations of a more spiritual kind also, by which that state of good works is interrupted, namely, when the world allures us by false ideals to become untrue to ourselves, to our own ideal, and to pursue the phantasms of the world, as if we could thereby become something better than that to which we might attain in the way that God has assigned us, and within the limits prescribed to us by Him! By its applause, its wreaths, it will tempt us to conform to the time-spirit, to serve two masters, to make compromises, false agreements, and so on. Many of us know well from personal experience such periods in our life, when the temptation approached us to deviate from the path marked out for us, and instead of rightly caring for and tending the plantation that our heavenly Father had entrusted to us, rather artificially to call into life other supposed better plantations at our own hand. In such assaults, however, the important thing is not to fall into temptation, but to remember that word of the Lord, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv. 10); it is important to recur to the quiet exercise of the labours of our calling, and with this return to make at the same time a new advance.

As we may speak of changing states in the life of a Christian, so also of changing times. There are good and bad times, in which connection we may think, with reference to what has been previously discussed, on the time of good spirits on the one hand, on the other on that of impure, bad

spirits. There are rich and poor, fruitful and unfruitful times. There are times of new, reviving experiences, and of new problems, whether these problems come to us from within, or are set us from without; and again times of uniformity, when life goes its usual smooth course in the daily circuit of repetitions. There are times of expectation, whether in reference to external or internal occurrences; and there are times of fulfilment. But amid all change of times we are to hold fast to the One thing that is high above all time, and independent of it. In times of uniform repetition, we are not to weary in daily labour, and likewise to consider this, that in such times that parable of the Lord is often quite imperceptibly fulfilled, "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how" (Mark iv. 26 f.). There often proceeds a quiet growth in secret in the unconscious, the nocturnal domain of our existence, a growth that will become manifest at the right time. During times of expectation we are to learn to wait upon the Lord, which applies especially to times of inward poverty, need, and pressure, of which we must so often say, "Bad times pass slowly;" but this tarrying, this waiting on the Lord, is to be no idle sitting still. One must during it work and pray as well as may be, do his daily task of duty as well as he can.

The change of states and times here depicted runs through the whole temporal life. It is peculiar to this that all elements of life emerge in their distinction, that life, so to say, is severed into its parts, each one of which must be lived through for itself. This is typically and divinely represented to us in Christ, and in His whole temporal development during His course on earth. We see in Him a change of states, so that now His divinity, as in the transfiguration on the mount, is that which chiefly reveals itself; now again His humanity, as in Gethsemane, and in His desertion by God on the cross, where His human nature is, as it were, isolated and left to itself. This alternation first ceases after the resurrection. In all His appearances during the forty days after the resurrection, He stands before our view in the peace of eternity, in which there is no change.

## § 165.

Amid all the growth and struggle of sanctification, amid its various states, as well as amid the many divine leadings of our life, with their sunny and their rainy days, their lots and fates, the Christian character is developed and ripens. But as the *development of Christian character* is not a mere process of nature, but a development in the sphere of moral freedom, where God and man are the two chief factors, there emerges the problem, at every moment of the history of our development, to prove "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" concerning us (Rom. xii. 2). To know God's good and acceptable will is not only to know the will of God in general as this is revealed to us in the law and in the gospel, but to know what is His will concerning *us* and with *us*, as well in particular, special cases, as also in our personal course of life as a whole. We must therefore strive to preserve the most lively and tender susceptibility for the voices of God or His utterances, as well in our inward life as in the external events and allotments which befall ourselves, that we may never and nowhere fail to hear the call of our Lord, and neither lose nor miss our God-willed development. But this attention becomes especially necessary at the *turning-points* of our life, when an epoch of our education is closed, and the Lord will lead us over to a new epoch. Turning-points and crises in the development of character may proceed at times purely from within, but very frequently they occur in connection with changes of the external situation of life. We are placed in a new situation, be it that in our time something new emerges, to which we must internally take a position, *e.g.*, a new knowledge presented to us, which may be of decisive influence in the shaping of our future; be it that we enter on a relation to men who in one or other respect are called to be God's messengers to us; be it that we have to make a new choice in respect of the way we are to adhere to in our activity, that the business is to cross the Rubicon, to utter a *jacta est alea* (the die is cast); be it that in our external position a sudden change occurs, whereby we are led into the school of suffering; be it that a happiness is offered to us, a life-relationship, a connection that may prove



a blessing to us. Here the great thing is not to miss "the acceptable time, the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2), not to ignore God's good and acceptable will with us. If we may compare smaller with greater, the people of Israel may afford an abiding type (warning example) what it is to miss the acceptable time. The appearance of Christ in the midst of the people was to them the decisive turning-point, the time of their visitation (Luke xix. 42-44). But they regarded Him not, in the humble form of a servant; and even in the days when Jerusalem was destroyed, they continued to expect their Messiah, after the true Messiah Himself had passed before them. The same thing recurs in many forms in the life of men, of this and that individual Christian, namely, that at the decisive turning-point they fail to lay hold of what should have been laid hold of, shut their eyes on the new view which even now ought to appear to them, ignore the men who are the Lord's veiled messengers to them, despise Christ in His instruments and in His individual utterances precisely for them, even granting that they in a general way hold Him in honour. In consequence of every such failure, there occurs a pause, a stoppage in personal development. The pulse of the inner life stops, and time now exercises its power upon it, so that it begins to age and die. For the divine intention was that a new evolution should occur; and only by growing and progressing can we conquer the power of ageing time. Ever anew we meet with Christians who bear the evident marks of a lost development, the marks of arrest, of stagnation,—Christians whose life is only the feeble echo of something that has been, a mere repetition of the past; for grace has passed them with a new element of life, but which they have not received into themselves,—an element which should have brought them a new present, a spiritual rejuvenescence. Others recognise, indeed, that in the situation there is something new, whereby the Lord is speaking to them; but in haste and thoughtlessness they mistake His sign, and the new way that they adopt, the chosen new activity, the use that they make of their new knowledge, is the very opposite of that to which the Lord would lead them. Thus the Lord, perhaps, awakens a gifted Christian preacher to revive dead religiousness, dead churchli-

ness in the people, to build the Church of Christ anew, so that he may help again to fill the existing church forms with spirit and life. But instead of following this call, he quits the National Church as a Babel, and founds a sect in which all manner of fanaticisms get free play. The development of his character is lost in egoism, in pride and internal contradictions. Or let us go back to the history of the Reformation. It then occurred through Luther's powerful reforming appearance, who with internal necessity, as by the power of circumstances, was brought to break with the Church of Rome, that the Lord caused a new light to arise on the spirit of Erasmus. But instead of following the call from above, and joining Luther, whom he at least had begun to understand and acknowledge, Erasmus missed this important turning-point of his life, and came at last to contest the work of the Reformation. And Erasmus, again, may remind us of Gamaliel in the days of the apostles, who likewise missed the turning-point of his life, in retreating into that self-conceived counsel of prudent waiting, and thenceforth remained passive instead of actively, with personal faith and confession, joining himself to the cause of Christ.

Yet, as long as a man exists in time, so long as he has still a history, there still remains for the development of his character the possibility of new turning-points, which recur after certain intervals in the life of individuals as of nations. It very often happens that the divine grace brings back a man by many deviations to the way that is God's. We experience to our shame more than once that the right that we should have grasped lay quite near us, while we with great efforts sought it in the distance, and pursued a phantasm about which we made much ado. And in many cases we are like the children of Israel, who needed forty years, on account of their sins, to reach the land of promise and blessing, while the road can be travelled in forty days. Therefore, in the course of the development of character, grace affords us renewed times of repentance and conversion, in which we should become conscious of our failures and wanderings, turn from them, and be renewed in the inner man. But even because such times of repentance form the necessary condition that what has been neglected and lost may be made good

again, it is of great importance that we pay heed to the divine chastisements in our life, for they, too, are often overlooked and misunderstood. In what befalls us, in our adversities, the opposition that we meet with among people, the failure of the blessing of our industry, we can often by right attention recognise a reflection of our own sins and errors; while the Lord by all this will lead us to self-knowledge and consideration, will summon us to renewed self-examination. Even the resounding applause of the world may sometimes seem to us like a chastisement from the Lord, like an irony of the divine government, by which it will convince us of the contradiction between our efforts and what the kingdom of God requires of us. "So it is come to this with thee, that *these* people celebrate thee, that *they* count thee among their own?" But many misunderstand under every form the chastisement of their God, and only the more exert their power forcibly to obtain the object they have in view.

But in all circumstances it is important to "redeem the time" (Eph. v. 16). And most men who, in an hour of clear reflection, look back upon their life, will acknowledge that much has been neglected, not only in the highest and holiest, but also in humble earthly respects, because we did not use the decisive moment when we had a choice given us, did not regard what we should have grasped, yea, pushed it from us, while we seized what we should have given up. Think, for example, on the relation between man and wife, which may become of importance for the whole life;<sup>1</sup> or on the entrance on a new position in life, which perhaps is decisive for our whole career. Or think of a one-sided party spirit, in which in some time of commotion in his life one gets himself involved, but whose fetters he cannot afterwards shake off. General rules cannot be laid down, for all this can only be judged after individual circumstances. In fine, as regards the highest and holiest relation of our soul, all is expressed in

<sup>1</sup> Goethe said to Eckermann (*Gespräche*, III. 299): "Lili was indeed the first that I deeply and truly loved. I can also say that she was the last. I was never so near my proper happiness as in that time of my love to Lili. The hindrances that kept us apart were at bottom not insuperable, and yet she was lost to me." Such things do not remain without results.

the one word, "Watch and pray." Have oil always in your lamps, for "ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man will come" (Matt. xxv. 13). And He comes to prove and to reveal our inmost being. But as in worldly things it is true that there is often more good fortune than understanding, so it also holds in a Christian point of view, that the Lord's guidance often makes good what we in our folly have spoiled, and the most finished Christian characters will acknowledge at the end of their life that grace has made them what they are *despite* all that they missed and lost. True, they must also be able to say with Paul, "His grace bestowed on me was not in vain" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

### § 166.

As no Christian development of character is uninterruptedly progressive, but every one includes in itself a constant alternation of falling and rising again, so every Christian will have moments in which he, although one in a higher, another in a lower degree, regards himself among the fallen (*lapsi*). Now, as a fall into sin by the regenerate man is ever a relapse into the old worldly state, and thereby brings with it a relative loss of grace, the question arises whether it is conceivable and possible that a Christian character should absolutely fall from the state of grace, from the state of righteousness and holiness, which would then be as an absolute falling away from Christ, at the same time an absolute relapse into the world and worldly state, whereby the begun and relatively advanced development of character would entirely retrograde and disappear (compare the Author's *Dogmatics*, § 235). That this is possible some have affirmed, but others as decisively denied. Practically the matter ever takes this position, that a Christian should "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, and forgetting what is behind, reach forth to that which is before" (Phil. iii. 13). For even if one in *general* holds and is persuaded that it must be possible for a Christian character to attain to such a degree of establishment in grace, that an absolute fall from Christ is no more possible, which, however, does not exclude the possibility of many, even great sins and retrogressions; even

when one must thus acknowledge a state of soul where the inner necessity of good (*beata necessitas boni*) has gained such a power that the personality no longer in an absolute sense can stand to choose between Christ and the world, and that here freedom of choice has ceased; yet *in the individual*, in each special case, it remains undefinable where this stage of internal confirmation and ripeness is really entered on, and nothing must be more earnestly dreaded and guarded against than self-deception in this point. Practically the matter will ever assume this shape, that we must constantly keep in view that communion with Christ may be lost again by a continued "grieving of the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. iv. 30), by thoughts, words, and actions that are unworthy of our Christian standing, by a continued resistance of His Spirit; that there is a sin unto death (1 John v. 16), which makes itself known as falling away from Christ in thought, word, or work, which, even if only temporarily, makes repentance and faith impossible, and involves such a loss of the state of grace as can only be replaced and restored by the most earnest penitent struggles; that this falling from Christ may end with the sin that is not forgiven, the sin against the Holy Spirit, where the man in enmity and hatred opposes himself to inwardly attracting grace (*resistentia malitiosa*). We must also keep alive the consciousness that communion with Christ can be lost not only by positive resistance, but also by continued indifference, lukewarmness, and neglect; by continued sins of weakness, against which one does not strive; a continued "quenching of the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19). The inner life may imperceptibly wither and die; that communion may have already ceased while the man still imagines that it exists. And as the only sure mark by which to know that one is in the state of grace is nothing else than incessant renewal in repentance and faith, by which he is ever led anew into earnest internal struggles, therefore a Christian, who can only judge himself so imperfectly, and so must leave the judgment of the firmness of his Christian character entirely to the Lord, will always combine with trust in God's grace, watchfulness and prudence also. Even the Apostle Paul, whom we are warranted to reckon among the perfect (*τέλειοι*), says of himself, "I buffet my body, and bring it



into subjection, lest when I have preached to others I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. ix. 27). Now, though we must certainly, from the character and all the Christian antecedents of the apostle, regard it as something inconceivable that he should ever actually fall from grace, yet we cannot but recognise that the danger which he confesses to contend against had also full reality and importance for him; from which we are to learn that every Christian, however far advanced he may be, to the last must press to the mark for the prize of the heavenly calling "in trembling hope."

Now, if a Christian, although in full assurance of grace, must yet, in the earnestness of holy anxiety, work and labour that he may be saved, and amid the labour for his heavenly, likewise accomplish the works of his earthly calling, to which the Lord has called him, and trade with the pounds entrusted to him, certainly he will also use the means of advancement offered to him, will abstain from all that can hinder him, and exercise the abilities that are of service to him in this. And so we meet the conception of Christian *ascetics*.

### *Ascetics.*

#### § 167.

That we maintain the necessity of ascetics for the development of the Christian character, that is, of such actions as merely aim at "exercise" in virtue, and are mere means that cannot themselves likewise count as ends; this would only contradict the fundamental doctrines and the spirit of the Evangelical Church, if we were to attribute to ascetics a greater importance than this,—to be a crutch that gradually makes itself superfluous. On the basis of the Evangelical Church, no one can regard it as his problem to train himself to a character for whom ascetics were the keynote, and formed the essential contents of life. For if I am to labour for my personal perfecting, I am to do so only while likewise fulfilling the life-problem in human society set me by God, as even Christ also, in the example left us, only in this wise carried out His personal perfection, that He likewise finished

the work that the Father had given Him. If we yet maintain, and that from our evangelical standpoint, a relative justification of ascetics, we establish this by means of the already discussed Lutheran doctrine "of the third use of the law" (*tertius usus legis*), according to which the regenerate one is not in every respect freed from the law, but in certain respects needs to be placed under a rule and discipline which is arranged to correspond to the *actual life-problem* of his individuality. And in thus asserting an element of law within the gospel and the life devoted to the ideal, we yet only set it forth as one that is destined more and more to disappear. In voluntarily subjecting ourselves to a discipline, we treat ourselves as children, as minors. Schleiermacher, indeed, says in his *Monologues*: "Shame on thee, free spirit, if one thing in thee should serve another: nothing in thee should be means: one is worth as much as the other." To this we reply that we also, who have found freedom in Christ, are ashamed still to need such exercises as do not become the perfect, for whom no element of life is a mere means, but ever likewise an end in itself, with an infinite intrinsic value. But so long as we do not yet belong to the perfect, so long as we are still children (*νήπιοι*), we feel the inward compulsion to treat ourselves as such.

### § 168.

The object of ascetics is dominion of the spirit over the flesh, combating egoism as well in its finer, more spiritual form, as in its sensuous and lower direction, combating all self-exaltation and pride, as well as lust of the flesh and of the eyes (1 John ii. 16). But this dominion of the spirit over the flesh is again specialized for every individual by his special development of character; and to strive after dominion of the spirit over flesh and world means for the individual as much as the endeavour to make himself a perfect *character* corresponding to his own individuality. Now, as the perfection of character consists in its purity, its energy, and its harmony, ascetic actions can also be grouped essentially in this threefold direction.

As purity of character depends on purity of sentiment, the

ascetic actions belonging to this will be chiefly the contemplative-mystical: study (quiet edifying consideration) of the divine word, prayer, participation in public worship, and partaking of the Sacrament. These actions, which in their nature must likewise be held as independent ends, as free effusions of the believing mind, become in this connection lowered to means, in that we prescribe to ourselves an order, a law, a regular use, in order hereby to promote on all sides the dominion of the spirit within us, to combat sin, and to cultivate the higher life. As the indispensable condition for purity of character is *self-knowledge*, and that in the spirit of Christ, we may designate this as the first and chief ascetic means that must be exercised, in order that, in opposition to the pride of life, right humility may be cultivated in connection with internal obedience. While the perfect (*perfecti*) need to appoint no definite hours for self-examination, because a spirit of self-examination pervades their whole life, and special self-examination, when necessary, takes place of itself at the proper time, it is necessary for the less advanced to observe definite hours in which they prove themselves in the light of God's word.

Whether and how far in this respect it is advantageous to keep a *diary*, is a question that cannot be answered generally, but only with respect to the special individuality. Those that keep a moral diary, seek therein a means to enable them from time to time to take a review of their life. For by nature we incline to forgetfulness, especially in regard to our faults and mistakes, and experience shows that men deal with nothing so regardlessly as with their recollections. The moral diary should only help our memory, and by that means our self-examination, in regard to our progress and retrogression and the much that we still lack. At the close of the week or of the month one then holds a review with the aid of these records. Yet a danger is attached to this. While one in such wise daily represents to himself the details of his behaviour, and writes them down as in a confession that one makes to himself,—*e.g.* To-day I gave N. N. an unfriendly answer, because he visited me at an inconvenient hour; to-day I was lukewarm in prayer, and there was no propriety in my reading in the Holy Scriptures; or, to-day I succeeded in quenching my anger; to-day I gave a poor man ten shillings, and so on,

—in sinking into such details one is in danger, just as in the Catholic confession to a priest, to forget or set aside the chief thing, namely, the disposition, the deepest tendency of our will. On the other hand, it must indeed be said that the disposition should be proved in the details of life, and that it is of little use to comfort oneself with one's disposition and goodwill, if this is without power to realize itself. But even granting that both sides are combined, the external and the internal, that is, that actions as well as motives are examined, a danger here threatens which indeed lies near all self-examination, but for certain individualities is increased by keeping a diary, because here one dwells more carefully on detail. There are natures which in this daily occupation with their own persons fall into a painful and anxious brooding on themselves, which unfits for labour in the actual life-problems; into a self-torture, in which a secret vanity plays a part, in that they incessantly, as it were, stand before the mirror, in order internally to dress themselves and to blow away the slightest particles of dust from their conscience; into an excessive compassion with themselves, and so also into an excessive indignation and excitement about their faults. In that they in unconscious pride require a perfection of themselves which at the present stage is simply impossible. Something of this is often shown in diaries that were kept by earnestly striving, morally eminent personalities. For instance, we may mention the diaries of the Princess von Gallitzin. They are among the most distinguished in this kind, and testify to a really admirable self-knowledge, in which she daily grew, while she unveiled herself before herself, and searched the most secret corners of her soul. On reading these diaries, one must fully agree with her when she says: "It is one thing to know men as Christian philosophy, as a thinker like Pascal can teach us; it is another to know men as people of the world, like Helvetius, Machiavelli, and others can teach us, without therefore leading us further in wisdom; but to know oneself is different from both."<sup>1</sup> Over against such a self-knowledge one feels more vividly than ever, that many quit life who are well known to all the world

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher der Fürstin Amalie von Gallitzin. Neue Folge. Die Einleitung von Schlüter*, p. viii.

but entirely unknown to themselves. But however deep and comprehensive her self-knowledge, however fine her knowledge of the inmost movements of her soul, however touching the pain, the compassion, that she feels for her own misery, with however admirable strictness, yea, severity, she judges and chastises herself, yet one cannot avoid the impression that she is immoderate in her endeavour after personal perfection, and that, rightly understood, she might need an ingredient of the "moderate morality." Her friend Hamann is right when he uses the expression concerning her that she had been sick of the passion for greatness and goodness of heart, and that the anger at her faults which at times boiled up in her amounted at bottom to pride.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes she herself expressed a consciousness of this. She hears within her a voice that speaks to her: "At bottom it is unbelief, secret unbelief and *pleasure-seeking*, whence proceed all thy efforts and cares to observe how the seed grows within thee."<sup>2</sup> After a confession through which she had fallen into hyper-criticism, she says: "I feel that such doubts make me hypochondriac; so I will rather *rely upon God's mercy*, endeavour to become different, *act, act, act*, instead of brooding over the past, constantly pray for light between the two rocks, anxiety and levity, that I may bring through my conscience without offence."<sup>3</sup> In these words she expresses the right standpoint. Self-observation can only preserve its healthiness by remaining inseparably combined with a healthy self-forgetfulness amid the actual problems of life ("act, act!"), in the submissive appropriation of the rich fulness of existence, and above all combined with the diligent consideration of what God has done for us, despite all our faults and weaknesses. All compassion with ourselves, all displeasure with ourselves, must ever lead us back again to the mercy of God. Every review of a longer section of our life will make us aware that none of us has in all respects kept what he has vowed, none has entirely fulfilled his calling, but that for our comfort and to raise us up, God's wonderful favour and grace still winds through our course of life, and that therefore as regards the

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher der Fürstin Amalie von Gallitzin. Neue Folge. Die Einleitung von Schlüter*, p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.



salvation of our souls, we should cast all care upon Him. We may, with the parson in *Gabrieli's Letters*, appropriate that verse of the old poet:<sup>1</sup>

“The sun of my soul is the Lord ;  
Its source, its life, its bliss is God ;  
And therefore I may trust Him still :  
'Tis *His own field*: He will it till.”

Yes, my soul is God's own arable field (1 Cor. iii. 9). He Himself will cultivate and tend it, will also finish the work He has begun (Phil. i. 6), if only I myself place no hindrances in His way, which no doubt may also take place through my haste, impatience, and overstraining. While we apply to ourselves also the Lord's parable above quoted, of the seed imperceptibly germinating and growing, unknown to man, the image of the kingdom of heaven, it requires of us to look away from ourselves in a right and healthy way, requires a genuinely Christian freedom from care (because, that is, God cares). We may not every moment, so to say, touch the seedling, and tear it from its soil to see how it is growing. A good diary should, therefore, not only contain self-observations, but also observations on whatever in word and life we deeply meditated upon, whatever served to enlarge our view and our heart, deeply moved our inner being, and gave it new nourishment. To hit the right mean, to preserve the right relation between self-contemplation and self-forgetfulness, is the art. A perfect counterpart to the diaries of the Princess von Gallitzin is furnished by Goethe's *Autobiography*, and other records of his in which he takes a review of days and years of his life. For with him what predominates is the glance directed outwards, the appropriation of the fulness and varied multiplicity of life. But herewith the ethical problems undeniably retire into the background, before the problems of culture, art, and science.

The keeping of a diary becomes still more questionable for individuals who, with the possibility in view that their confessions may fall into the hands of others, do not possess the strength to write down the full truth, and now in a bad sense idealize themselves, yea, get carried away to self-deception and hypocrisy. We will not dwell longer on such a danger, but

<sup>1</sup>H. A. Brorson, born 1691, died 1764.

emphasize the fact that there are personalities who apply this means of self-examination with true blessing. So Franz Baader, who wrote his diaries in his youth. These afford us a glance into the first development of the aspiring youth, his inner intellectual as well as ethical-religious conflicts, and are composed with such a truth and depth of self-observation, that they may be reckoned among the most excellent books of edification. They are adapted to be helpful to the reader in his self-examination, and give him at the same time the most powerful impulse in the right way to engage in the manifestations of the world's life, to go deeply into God's revelations, as well those that appear to us in nature as in the world of spirit. In Lavater's *Secret Diary of an Observer of Himself*, the reader will also find many features of his own history, and likewise receive impulse to a life of faith working in love.

But whether one keep a diary or not, no one may forego self-examination; yet he must at the same time overcome both the chief dangers previously mentioned, namely, that of superficial levity on the one hand, that of anxiety on the other. But we are to overcome levity by becoming absorbed in the earnest requirement of holiness, by vividly realizing the contrast between ideal and reality. And we are to combat anxiety by looking to the mercy of God, and by ever anew giving ourselves to the problems of life, both accepting and faithfully working at them. If, then, in this spirit, in truth and righteousness, we set about our self-examination, it is of great importance to use also in this the contributions afforded us by the judgments of others about us, whether these judgments come from friends or from opponents and enemies. As the latter see our faults with a sharp glance, and through a magnifying-glass, that glass which they lend us may often help us to see what without it we would not so easily observe. They draw our attention to the caricature of our being, against which we all have cause to be upon our guard, and combat it, whether that caricature of us has already been partly realized, or only exists as a possibility and a disposition. Even when praise is bestowed on us by others with the best intention, we may often be terrified to discover that we certainly have been guilty of a great fault.

In fine, for our self-examination, we can even use the hints

that are given to us in our *dreams*. For the *longing and volition* that emerges in the dream shows us in every case what stirs in the natural basis of our will; and we may there at times make not only surprising, but also warning discoveries.

### § 169.

As the energy of the character consists in its power to translate sentiment into action, ascetic actions in this respect will very specially acquire practical importance, while they do not exclude but include the contemplative-mystical, pious consideration and prayer. And as self-denial, which is inseparable from self-control, is the indispensable condition for an energetic acting in the spirit of Christ, we name *self-denial* as the second chief ascetic means that is to be applied to cultivate true chastity and true poverty, in contrast to the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. Self-denial and self-control are not the same. The latter is only an element of the former, and is only the right self-control when it is the handmaid of self-denial. Self-control is the dominion of the will over our nature, over inclination and temperament, and therewith likewise over all that is meant to be the will's organ, its ministering instrument, bodily as well as spiritual. But self-control in itself may still be in the service of egoism,—and how many egoists are virtuosi in self-control!—whereas the essence of self-denial consists in killing egoism in its root (which is so often urged by Fenelon, and that in the most beautiful way), not merely this or that inclination, but making a sacrifice of the whole natural man. Self-control in itself ever holds fast to self, which is specially observable in stoicism, where the ego is the proper centre of all thought and effort; in self-denial, again, this is just what is sacrificed, while our will entirely submits to the divine will, and the man himself dies with Christ to live with Him. Self-denial, in its deepest root, is obedience, is the practical strengthening (exertion) of humility, and the actual death of pride, which is by no means implied in self-control, which can fitly co-exist with pride and disobedience. It is only self-denial that leads not only to outward, bodily, but also to inward *chastity*, understanding by chastity, in the widest sense, the subordination of the sensuous,

the natural, under the spirit or the divine, so that the natural attains in us to no unsuitable self-dependence. It is self-denial that also leads to true *poverty*, that is, the internal independence of worldly things, of earthly possession and honour, of all desire of the phenomenal. For he that denies himself, and is thereby confirmed in the One unchangeable thing, is not taken possession of by the worldly things, but possesses them as if he possessed them not. On the other hand, it may also indeed be said that, without self-control, self-denial and obedience cannot be carried out. We can only be God's servants when we are masters in the bodily and spiritual organism entrusted to us.

It belongs to true self-control that the will be not only lord over our bodily organs, but also over our *world of thought*, which amounts to this: the will places the thinking life and its utterances by prudence and watchfulness (self-discipline) in the normal relation to the entire personal problem. To be sunk in reflections that our will cannot break off when duty calls to another task, or to be sunk in dreamy brooding over dim ideas, or to let oneself be internally hunted about by the accidental play of the association of ideas—all this is lack of self-control, inasmuch as the will of the man is then ensnared and entangled in his world of thought, instead of being the free, self-controlling centre of it. So also we say that it belongs to self-control that the will be lord over the world of its *fancy*. If we would exercise ourselves in self-control, there is nothing against which we must stand more upon our guard than against the danger of becoming dependent on an irregularly roving fancy. The same spiritual capacity which in its union with the reason becomes the organ for what is noblest, and without which no human will has ever done anything great, becomes in its lawless state a destructive and treacherous power. The lawless fancy is a juggler, a Maja,<sup>1</sup> that shows us a magic mirror filled with illusions and untrue pictures. Each of our desires only needs to look into this mirror in order forthwith to increase to passion; and as desire by nature has the mirror of fancy beside it, it will infallibly ever continue to look into it, except it be withdrawn from it by a higher moral power. Sensuous love and ambition see in

<sup>1</sup> See Note, p. 101.

fancy their objects in a preternatural and magical light, that makes them more and more irresistible. But antipathy, distrust, enmity, and jealousy will also soon see their objects, by the magic of the fancy, increase to preternatural magnitude; and passion increases along with the mirrored image hovering before us. We have a great instance in Shakespeare's *Othello*, whose jealousy is wound up to its frightful height by the activity of the fancy, and the phantasms that this conjures up. But daily life is also rich in examples. It is ever anew occurring that men picture to themselves real, or even only imaginary opponents quite differently and in far blacker colours than they are in reality. And in many, the magic with which the fancy dominates their will is also manifested in this, that they cannot but constantly occupy themselves with persons for whom they have an aversion, and incessantly "monologize," as the Princess von Gallitzin somewhere expresses it, with these absent ones; that they in fancy have frequent meetings and contact with persons whom they as much as possible avoid in actual life, and of whom they declare that they are entirely indifferent to them. It will not be possible to write the secret history of the human heart without writing along with it a history of the activity of the fancy; and every confessional will have much to tell of this. But as it belongs to self-control to keep oneself free and independent of all impure, not ethical, irregularly roving fancies, so also from dim feelings, accidental moods and humours, which are often connected with states of the body, and arise from the unconscious, nocturnal domain of our being. The will must also be lord in its world of feeling, show itself as the idealizing power over it, and only yield to those feelings and moods that may be yielded to. The first thing, therefore, that is necessary, if we are to remain independent of the deceptions of the fancy, of the change of feelings and moods, is this, that we make for ourselves firm *principles*, definite rules and purposes, and keep to them amid all changes. But that such principles may become and continue effectual, it is not only requisite that the will be sanctified, but also the organs, bodily and spiritual, must be cultivated in the service of holiness, that they may come, even without special effort, to work *of themselves* in a normal direction, may become fit and ready to serve the will. The



more perfectly our sanctification is carried out, the more will principle and natural inclination coincide, the more will the organs, with ease and without resistance, move in the same direction as the will. On the other hand, the more imperfect sanctification is, there is the more conflict between the will and the organs, which last have then a tendency to anarchy, and would go their own way. It becomes, then, the more necessary for maintaining the dominion of the moral will, that we prescribe to ourselves ascetic dietetics and gymnastics.

### § 170.

As a direction to the mode of life most serviceable for our health, *dietetic* pursues the normal course of the activity of bodily life, and along with that also the proper *moderation*, the right relation between abstinence and enjoyment, exertion and rest. But ascetic dietetic is at the same time bodily and spiritual. It is to be a means of recovering the health of the entire man, by bringing back the personal organism to its right measure, equipoise, and order. Now, as the chief form of sin in every human individual is twofold, namely, sensuality and pride, such means especially must be applied as are best adapted to quench sensuality and pride, or are adapted not only to make the man sober and chaste, but also humble, and thereby to bring him into a frame that forms the perfect contrast to that in which hearts, although in various degrees, are made heavy with "surfeiting and drunkenness," sensual excess and pride of life (Rom. xiii. 13). *Fasting* and *prayer* are the two chief means that the Church from of old has commended to believers, and which, in combination and rightly applied, have also really approved themselves as the right means. The degree and range of their application indeed, especially as regards fasting, cannot be defined generally, but only according to individual needs and circumstances. Yet all who need ascetics at all will also need at certain times, and in a certain degree, and will impose it on themselves, to abstain from certain enjoyments, although allowable in themselves (Rom. xiii. 14). Yet the application must ever be individually conditioned, because the abstinence has only a moral import, so far as it prepares the body to be a willing instrument of the

spirit; wherefore an extreme abstinence, and also bodily mortifications, by which the health is undermined, are absolutely to be rejected. For this very reason, that the last end of bodily ascetic is nothing else than that mentioned, because it only aims to make the whole man healthy, ascetic dietetics must make it an urgent duty to preserve the right limits. "Drink no longer water," writes the apostle to Timothy, "but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. v. 23). Because the health and vigour of the whole man should be the chief aim, therefore the apostle here counsels to limit the mortifying, deadening, by a vivifying, enlivening ascetic. Overstrained abstinence and mortification also very often effects the very opposite of what is intended. The history of ascetics teaches us that by such overdone fasting, the fancy is often excited to an amazing degree, and in its airy domain affords the very things that one thought to have buried by means of mortifications, a magical resurrection. In this connection we will only refer to the fancies, the alluring and terrifying visions with which Saint Antony (died 356) was visited. Accordingly, it must be acknowledged that there are many cases where a moderate satisfaction of the sensual appetites is more promotive of morality than strict abstinence (1 Cor. vii. 5), so far, namely, as the latter can only be carried out amid continual internal unrest and constant assault of impure spirits. Under these circumstances, the decision is to be left to the conscience of the individual (namely, when the divine word neither contains an express command nor prohibition), whether abstinence or satisfaction be on the whole that which most benefits his ethical existence. In every case, however, bodily dietetic must go hand in hand with spiritual, without which the former can only be of little use. In a spiritual point of view, it may also be needful for us to prescribe to ourselves a certain abstinence. For although "to the pure all things are pure" (Tit. i. 15), yet, in fact, but few are pure, and much that is healthy to the healthy is not so to the sick also. As regards both social entertainments and artistic enjoyments, *e.g.* the drama, most yield themselves to impressions that are only innocuous to a very confirmed morality, and live in a spiritual security, as if they were at the height of liberty, and were able to assure themselves that *their* sensuality, *their*

fancy, is thoroughly unassailable. But for us all, and in all circumstances, it may hold as a rule that we must be very critical regarding the ideas that we permit to enter our soul, and with which we occupy ourselves, especially in the choice of our reading, both as regards its quality and also its quantity. As the quality of the bodily nourishment is not indifferent, since what we partake of is changed into our flesh and blood, and we must therefore distinguish the foods that are suitable to us from those that are not, so we must also be most guarded in respect to the thoughts and pictures which we receive within us, the materials that we allow to pass into our flesh and blood, and from which the soul fashions its inner, invisible body. People who, *e.g.*, only seek their spiritual food in the bad, ephemeral literature of the day, and so only digest unhealthy food, must, in a spiritual point of view, get unhealthy juices and weakened internal organs. But so, too, the quantity is by all means to be regarded. Even granting that one seeks his food in spiritual materials that in their nature are well adapted to afford good nourishment, that contain purifying as well as strengthening, enlivening powers, yet one fails in his object if one will assimilate too much at once, and receive more than one can work up. One may read too much, whereby not only the spiritual digestion suffers, but the power of production is weakened. Especially in the enjoyment of works of art, it is as with the enjoyment of an excellent wine, which, moderately used, has a strengthening effect, but weakens when used immoderately. As the æsthetic periods of history prove, there is also an æsthetic gluttony which must be guarded against, lest the heart be laden thereby. And to the most of those who are chiefly disposed to ideal occupations, it may be serviceable at times to have a period of fasting, for purifying, strengthening, and regulating their spiritual organism.

Along with prayer and fasting, the old ascetics gave the counsel to practise also *death-thoughts*, and to surround oneself with symbols of death. We also commend such as a counterpoise against a false worldly happiness, against all avarice, covetousness, and greed of gain, as also against all desire of the phenomenal (which is directed to nothing but to see and hear some new thing, compare Acts xvii. 21). Against this greediness it is wholesome to practise death-

thoughts, and to quicken and preserve the idea of the perishableness of all belonging to the world :

“The glory of the earth all  
Must turn to smoke and ashes ;  
No rock, no bronze can stay.  
And that which can delight us,  
Which precious doth invite us,  
Will as a light dream pass away.

We reckon year upon year,  
But, ah ! meanwhile the dark bier  
Is brought before our door.  
And thereupon hence must we,  
And, ere we can bethink us,  
Bid earth farewell for evermore.”

### § 171.

While the ascetic dietetic aims to lead back the organism to its right measure, and to bring it into the right order, the ascetic *gymnastic* aims to train the bodily as well as the spiritual organism to strength, dexterity, and reliability. We should exercise the bodily and mental abilities that are necessary for our life. In this connection we may recall to mind the old Greeks, who had so vivid a consciousness of the importance of bodily exercises ; while Rousseau's and Pestalozzi's exhortations also deserve to be laid to heart, to cultivate our bodily senses, which must certainly ever be combined with the cultivation of the corresponding spiritual senses, especially spiritual seeing and hearing. This cultivation of our organs is of benefit to us in the work of our calling ; and, what is the chief thing in a personal point of view, we are thereby exercised in self-control and self-conquest. Exercise consists in repetition, and repetition becomes our *habit*. We are to wean ourselves from our abnormalities, and on the other hand accustom ourselves to the normal, so that this becomes our second nature. We then become hardened to bear what the unexercised cannot bear, *e.g.*, bodily and spiritual cold, change of weather, and changing judgments of men : toil and exertion become easy to us. The here appropriate exercises in self-control may be partly merely formal and experimental, being arbitrarily laid upon oneself, as, *e.g.*, when one practises vigils or sleeping on

a hard bed, merely for the sake of self-control, and that one may not be inconvenienced thereby when cases occur; or when one imposes on himself the study of a subject in which one feels no interest whatever, only to exercise his patience and endurance; partly they may be exercises that occur in the fulfilment of the duties of our calling itself, and these are without doubt the most fruitful and effective. We have daily opportunity to exercise energy of will, to combat our dissipations, and to sharpen our *attention*. Schleiermacher was able to carry on an intellectual conversation, and at the same time to see and hear all that occurred and was spoken round about him, even at the farther side of the room. In our joint life with others we have constant opportunity to exercise ourselves in that discretion that complies with the apostle's exhortation, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak" (Jas. i. 19), an exhortation that manifestly presupposes that men mostly use their tongues too much, their ears again too little; as we also have opportunity to exercise ourselves after Job's example, who says (xxx. 1), "I have made a covenant with mine eyes;" or also to exercise ourselves in maintaining repose of mind and internal equipoise, in combating our indispositions and accidental moods (humours), in quenching our impatience, our pride, our vanity, especially our anger, which, even when it is just, must not fly up into rage and passion: wherefore an old proverb recommends us to take the pot from the fire ere it boil over. In innumerable situations we have opportunity to exercise ourselves in resisting what would disturb inward peace, every paroxysm of unrighteousness, or envy, or injured vanity; ever new occasion to shut up our trouble, our cares, in our own breast, and to cast them on God, so as not to weary man with them. Every one who would with real fidelity fulfil his life-task, which also includes fidelity in so-called trifles, will find rich, yea, abundantly rich opportunity for this. But if we would fulfil our task with all fidelity, one chief exercise especially deserves to be commended, namely, the practice and habit of getting *time* into our power, to have no idle hours, but to use each of our daily hours, and then also to pass with ease from one labour to another, from one situation to another, everywhere and at



every moment to have *presence* of mind ; in a word, we must exercise ourselves to find the transition from a dissipated, unfree existence, bound in time, into an existence *free* from time. Now, while the expression was used above that we ought so to exercise ourselves in self-control that this may become a *habit* to us, we must certainly be convinced that this is yet but an imperfect standpoint. For to habit, as such, there still cleaves a character of outwardness, a lack of entire inwardness, an element of mere legality—and there is a legality not merely in external actions, but also in the sentiment and the mind's movements—that is, something legal, not yet overcome by and glorified in love. But by the continued effort to internalize, our ascetic should do itself away, and habit should become more than habit—should bring it to this, that it becomes only the corresponding exterior to the free inwardness of love. The daily and hourly repetition should not become that of the necessity of nature, although habit is a *second* nature produced by cultivation, but rather the self-renewal and self-rejuvenescence of moral freedom in its peculiar love-derived conformity to law. This is the standpoint to be striven after, is the standpoint of the ideal ; and this stage once reached, ascetic is then superfluous.

As a special means that self-control should exercise, *vows* have played a great part, yet so that great aberrations have connected themselves with them. If one thought to find a protection against temptation by making a special vow to God, in order to bind himself yet more strongly thereby, it must be remembered that, apart from this, we are already bound to obey God, and that there is no duty whatever to which we were not already bound ; that there is only one vow that God requires of us, namely, our *baptismal vow*, which we have made immediately to the Church indeed, but which the Church has required of us as steward of the mysteries of God, and which includes in itself the obligation to obedience. No doubt it may be of use that we renew a good purpose before the presence of God. But solemnly to vow to God that to combat a particular sin or temptation, we will apply this or that *means*, a means not at all expressly prescribed in God's word, but prescribed by ourselves or

other men,—pedagogic, perhaps even merely experimental means, *e.g.*, a sacrifice that God does not require, an abstaining from certain in themselves permitted enjoyments,—is a folly, as our insight may possibly enlarge, and we may come to be convinced that God's will with us is that we should exercise ourselves in self-control in an entirely different way. The whole doctrine of special vows to God, so far as they should have an ascetic import, is to be reduced to this, that in all our ascetic we constantly renew our baptismal vow, and especially should remind ourselves how we have once for all renounced the devil, all his works and all his ways, and that we only apply this to the special case, the special requirement. Then we will also feel ourselves called upon to cleave to God in *prayer*, and to beseech Him to give us strength to carry out our good purpose, and that He Himself may enlighten us regarding the more special means and ways in and by which we are to attain to improvement. So far as men mutually oblige themselves by an oath reciprocally to strengthen their virtue, *e.g.*, in temperance societies, this may certainly have its practical importance. Only, Christians who enter into such societies must then be conscious that for their weakness' sake they are placing themselves on a non-evangelical standpoint, a legal standpoint, which gradually must become superfluous. The Catholic vows to God, that under certain conditions (that is, provided God first be helpful to *us*, or on our side in this or that matter) we will perform *opera supererogatoria*, that is to say, more than our duty requires, *e.g.*, pilgrimages, gifts to churches and monasteries, are, after the evangelical conception of duty, absolutely to be rejected.

### § 172.

As the harmony of the character is conditioned by its richness, and the indispensable condition of the latter is the spiritual disposition to be able to move in more than one direction, to open eye and sense to the manifold phenomena of life, to embrace many various interests at the same time; we call the *free mobility of the spirit* the chief ascetic means which, in connection with self-control, is the condition in order that the *sympathetic righteousness* may be developed,

that does justice to every element of life. This free movement, this width and many-sidedness of spirit, is entirely wanting, or at least is mostly thrust aside, in the ascetics of the cloister, in which the human is excluded from the Christian, and the aim of life is limited to the one thing needful, with an entire withdrawal from the manifold. While ascetic has constantly in sight the death's head and the hour-glass, the two symbols of mortality, with their reference to eternity, all thought revolves exclusively round self-knowledge and self-denial with self-control, to open the soul thereby for the eternal, and to prepare the entrance to it. But all that constitutes the *richness* of a character lies quite remote from that old ascetic in its monotonous religiousness. The free activity or elasticity of the spirit, of which we speak, allows the man livingly to combine the manifold with the one, the kingdom of humanity with the kingdom of God. In general, we may say that the free activity of spirit forms the opposite of the one-sidedness and narrowness by which the spirit is hemmed in as by toll-bars, its glance as by blinkers, that hinder both its free movement and its free view outward and around. To master this limitation, which, although in various degrees and in different directions, is innate in every man, and to cultivate a sense of the richness of life, the following means are to be employed:—above all the study of the Holy Scriptures, which, read with open eyes and rightly understood, show the highest universality; then intercourse with nature, the purifying and refreshing of the mind by products of art (æsthetic education), the study of history and of national life, also intercourse with men of various circles of society and culture. We yet add this important means: to live with one's time, to keep the eye open for all that is stirring in the present, in a good sense to live *with* one's contemporaries, to accompany them with one's sympathies and antipathies, but ever with a lively interest. Indifference to their own time, which, however bad aspects it may present, must yet never be indifferent to us, since the kingdom of God is passing *through it*, and, taking shape, leads men to a one-sided life in the past and the future, and to a monastic existence, in which much that is human is lost, in which even the highest, most ideal interests assume a weak faded colour, because

they are not tinged, or, as it were, besprinkled from the stream of the present, which with its immediate reality imparts to them the freshness of life. Yet one must ever anew recall to mind, that in cultivating the sense for the multiplicity of life, the true and proper chief end is to be kept in view, if this activity and many-sidedness of the spirit is really to serve to promote the harmony of the character, and not rather to effect the reverse. The manifold must ever be controlled by the One and Highest. We here refer to a remark that we made in a dietetic point of view, about that in which the spirit seeks its *food*. And, finally, against a perverted, worldly endeavour after a harmonious development, that saying of the Lord must be recalled to mind, that it is better to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than with two eyes to be cast into hell (Matt. xviii. 9).

The question may be raised, How does the here recommended fresh activity of spirit, which plays no part whatever with the old ascetics, admit of being united with the self-denial that requires us to die to the world and all desire for the phenomenal, while we asserted it as requisite that the sense for the phenomena of life be developed, that we should enter into the multiplicity of the world's life, and have an interest in its manifestations? We answer, that it is only sin to which we are to die, and to such a surrender to the phenomena as has no understanding for their essence and kernel. Our requirement harmonizes with self-denial, rightly understood, which not only includes self-control, but also healthy *self-forgetfulness*, so that we go out of ourselves, and can cherish a sense and sympathy for more than what immediately affects our person, our personal circle of life and work. But from this arises further the requirement, which the old ascetics in their world-renunciation did not know, that we in that healthy self-forgetfulness should not merely love human individuals, but should surrender ourselves sympathetically, in lively compassion and warm participation, to the richness of human life and of all existence.

## § 173.

*Self-knowledge* and *self-denial*, then, in connection with self-control, to which we also add the free and fresh activity of the spirit that unfolds itself in self-forgetfulness and surrender—these are what must be exercised, that humility and obedience, chastity, true (internal) poverty and sympathetic righteousness may be developed, and thereby love and evangelical liberty may take shape within us, or become *character*. But what must ever be kept in view is, that we strive towards the standpoint and the stage of the Christian life where ascetic is superfluous, where that which in ascetic only serves as means, becomes a living element in love, is assumed into and pervaded by this. Above all things this must be laboured for, that experimental ascetic obtain only a passing fading import, and that its crutches become superfluous. The best school for the formation of our character is the sphere of life and of sufferings into which the Lord Himself sends us. Now, although the school of life is different for every one, according to his special leadings in life, yet for all alike it takes shape as life in the moral circles of the community, namely, the family, the state, including the communities of culture, and, in fine, the Church. Within these circles each individual finds his special task, where *exercise* in virtue coincides with the actual *practice* (or performance of the task), and where the individual is to labour for his personal perfection, while he likewise labours for the perfection of the whole.





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